RAMPARTS

MAY · 1962

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RAMPARTS

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC JOURNAL

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THE FINALITY

GABRIEL MARCEL *is the dean of French existentialist thinkers, having preceded Sartre and his contemporaries by a good twenty years. He also heralded the return of philosophers to religious themes in his meditations and essays of the World War I years and the 1920's. And he developed his own version of the I-Thou relation, independently of Martin Buber. His major philosophical writings are* Metaphysical Journal, Being and Having, Homo Viator, The Mystery of Being, *and the still untranslated* Du Refus à l'invocation.
M. Marcel is also the author of over two dozen plays, comprising a unique drama of human conflicts, degradation, and aspiration, to which is added a notable gift for comedy and caricature. Available in English now are A Man of God, Ariadne, *and* The Funeral Pyre *in* Three Plays *(Hill & Wang), and* The Lantern *in* Cross Currents, *Spring, 1958.* La Dimension Florestan *(1958) is a broad and uproarious spoof of a philosopher bearing a notorious resemblance to Martin Heidegger, originally entitled* Die Wacht am Sein.
THE FINALITY OF THE DRAMA *originated as a lecture given by M. Marcel at the University of San Francisco, late in 1961.*

I AM FULLY AWARE of the ambiguity associated with the term finality in English. It is self-evident that I shall use it here in its strictly philosophical—or theological—meaning. Does a dramatic work have a finality? And if so, what is its nature? We shall have to see why the question in this context presents any significance or special relevance to contemporary theater. I shall approach the question as it applies to myself both as a playwright and as a drama critic. And clearly also, I shall never lose sight of what can be called the philosophical horizon of the problem.

Let us notice, to begin with, that this question can be answered and solved by the near invalidation of itself. This answer would consist in saying that the theater exists only to entertain, to fill time, or even, if you wish, as a way of killing time. It is all too obvious that a great number of plays actually do nothing else, and it is also true that a large number of theatergoers ask only that a play provide them with this kind of diversion. I have even gone so far as to say that the plays which we call in Paris *pièces de boulevard* can be treated as branches of gastronomy, the predominant characteristic of such plays being that they digest easily and that they even speed along the digestion of the dinner which preceded them.

But to ask oneself whether or not the art of the drama has a finality is precisely to ask oneself whether or not it reduces itself to being anything else than a diversion of this kind, and one can honestly say that the whole history of the drama before compels us to reply negatively.

Yet immediately a question comes up which requires us to use precise terms: philosophers and, in particular, Kant, have instituted a fundamental distinction between an internal finality and an external finality. There is external finality each time one finds oneself in the presence of an object that has been conceived and manufactured so as to fulfill some definite purpose. An instrument or a utensil of any sort whatever are instances of this. On the contrary, it is generally acknowledged that a living organism bears an internal finality which stems from the fact that the links which unite the organs and the functions are subordi-

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nated to a certain unity, which is the unity of the living body itself. In principle, there is no need here for the manufacturer, who has conceived the tool so that it will be able to fulfill some function, or for anyone like him, to intervene.

What could the external finality of a dramatic work be? It is immediately apparent that in each and every instance it would lie in the didactic bearing of the work. A play intended to illustrate a certain practical truth, of which the playwright wants his audience to be made aware, implies an external finality. I have said *practical* truth rather than a speculative one, because the playwright wishes to alert the spectator to some danger and to influence his behavior thereby. I shall mention two pertinent instances which serve here as extreme examples. There was in France at the beginning of the century a playwright by the name of Eugéne Brieux, who was, moreover, an extremely fine and worthy man, a man who was naively convinced that his calling in life was to devote his creative talents to the service of what he considered to be the good purpose. And so he wrote a play called *Les Remplacantes* in order to make the women of the middle class realize that they were wrong to delegate the feeding of their infants to wet nurses called in from the provinces. In another play, *Les Avariés*—it has been named *Damaged Goods* in the English translation which is enthusiastically prefaced by George Bernard Shaw—he alerted young people against venereal disease and undoubtedly intended to demonstrate the utility of a pre-marriage medical certificate. One wouldn't dream of challenging the wisdom of these counsels and recommendations, but, today, almost everyone would agree that he degraded the theater to a certain extent by mistaking it for a public pronouncement or a type of pamphleteering. Moreover, we shall have to ask ourselves, why this is so?

It would certainly be a serious mistake to think that the play with a thesis has disappeared today: it triumphs indeed in the work of Brecht, who, in the "Lehrstück," consciously uses the art of the drama to abet the cause of the Revolution. This last sentence must, moreover, be understood in an extremely broad sense. For this service actually consists in helping to form a new man, one freed from all the prejudices and from all the wrongs which vitiate capitalist society. On this subject Friedrich Heer, the playwright in charge of the Burgtheater in Vienna, wrote: "Man must learn to recognize his mortal enemies, to designate them as such and to arraign them. But above all else he must think that he moves and acts a-fresh. The theater will be conceived here as a moral institution in the strictest and most rigorous sense, as a place where new men take form. . . . Thus it is immanently a theater of war: on the stage, the lines will be spoken which will induce him to arms against the enemies of the people, enemies from without and from within." This didactic bearing is clearly discernible in all of Brecht's works, at least in all of those which are fully meaningful, and it is very strange to see how the French theatergoer, who usually detests feeling that he is being indoctrinated, is held very strongly under the domination of Brecht's work, even if he is in no way attracted by Communism. This was especially true in a play, quite mediocre in itself to my way of thinking, called *The Resistible Rise to Power of Arturo Ui*. Here, Brecht undertook to show in a sort of parabola the causes of Hitler's success. Yet one cannot imagine anything more misleading, anything more arbitrarily designed than this play which puts a gang of cauliflower dealers on the stage. The responsibilities which fall to the German people in its entirety are quite simply ignored here, as if only the traffickers had been guilty. But this work *does* illustrate the serious shortcoming which taints all theater of this *genre*: it implies a one-sided representation which is the servant of a partisan outlook, and by this very fact, it is a representation untrue to human reality. This is the same as saying that the author of the drama in such an instance commits the mistake, I should say even the unpardonable sin, of himself abetting the party adherent.

But I think it proper to give the problem some deep consideration and to ask oneself what *is* the

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basic objection which any didactic theater raises. I fully realize indeed that I am expressing my personal opinion here, that these are the fundamental ideas to which not only my own theatrical works must answer but which, furthermore, are the bases for the evaluations I make of the plays that I see each week, and about which I must make a professional assessment.

But here, it is fitting for me to anticipate an objection which cannot fail to present itself to the minds of the listeners. It is a fact, one might say to me, that you are limiting yourself here to issuing a personal opinion or preference which does not seem necessarily to have to be a consideration for some one who seeks to define the essence or bearing of a dramatic work.

To this I must reply that the word "preference" is deceptive here. Assuredly, we move here in the realm of freedom, and the reasons that one might invoke would not prevent some others from rallying over to the Brechtian conception, or if it were the question of a Christian theater, from rallying over to a didactic or apologetic conception of religious drama. But what is important to understand is that the matter of different standards for evaluation which we are discussing here can in no way be reduced to the matter of a difference of taste.

FIRST OF ALL, it cannot be unimportant to know that from the very beginning, not only in Greece, but also in the Far-East, the art of the drama was linked with religion, and it certainly does not suffice to say that this initial link was purely and plainly broken. When we consider certain masterworks of the theater, great plays, both ancient and modern, we cannot but acknowledge that these works still retain this element of the sacred within. However, this element of the sacred cannot exist except where a transcendence affirms itself with respect to the passions and to the ways of thinking which are inseparable from it. Three examples from the Greek theater have an illuminating importance for us here: Aeschylus's *The Eumenides*, and Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonna* and *Antigone*. It is self-evident that nothing will prevent the philistines, who are abundant today, from declaring that these works no longer affect them, and that as a consequence they challenge the testimonial which is in some way contained therein. But in adapting this attitude, they place themselves outside a certain great living tradition, and it is permissible to believe that a man cannot disown this tradition without to some extent disowning himself. Now, what is especially significant about such works of art is that they manifest a certain transcendent justice which upon reflection appears to be inseparable from Order or from Truth.

Here again, it is truly fitting to anticipate a possible objection. To subordinate the dramatic work to the manifestation of a certain justice or a certain truth, *is* this not, once again, to utilize it as an instrument, to use it as the agent of a precept which one intends to make accessible to the spectator? Does there exist, one will ask, an absolute difference, for instance, between this last didacticism and the previous one whose legitimacy you have challenged in Brecht? But I think that this parallel or similarity is unwarranted for the following reason: there intervenes in the "Lehrstück" of Brecht—let us think for example about the Prologue to the *Caucasian Chalk Circle*—a party stand both social and political along with the willful use of propaganda for the sake of the party line. And we cannot fail to perceive the presence of an author or, more exactly, of the party which has enlisted the author into its own service, whereas in the works of art that I have evoked there is a universal principle which must reveal itself from within the very movement of the dramatic action without at any moment the intervention of this foreign presence. Moreover, this is not only true for the Greek tragedy, but for great modern works, whether we look at Shakespeare or Racine, the great German tragedians, or Ibsen, or, in a very different register, even Chekov.

And although there may be something a bit improper and even slightly ridiculous about bringing up one's own personal experience in a context such as this, I should like now, in order to illustrate what I mean when I speak of the finality of a dramatic work, to recall the conditions under which, it seems to me, a realization of the need for dramatic expression grew up in me.

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At the very roots of coming to this knowledge was my loneliness as an only child who did not feel on a level with the adults around him, a loneliness which felt the need to populate itself from within, with the result that my first creations were undoubtedly the brothers and sisters whom I invented for myself as partners. However, another matter was even more decisive. From a very early age I painfully sensed, at first in an indefinable way, then later much more consciously, that I was living amidst people whose views on basic issues opposed one another. Let me mention one of many examples: at the time of the Dreyfus case, which so sharply divided the French, I noticed that there was a total schism between the opinions of my father and those of my aunt, who, since the death of my mother, had been a second mother to me. Whereas she was passionately for the Dreyfus cause and believed that the issues should be cleared up at all cost, my father, who was extremely conservative politically, was above all aware of the serious damage that this case was doing to French society as a whole, and, without asserting that Dreyfus was guilty, he deplored, that for the sake of a man who had no exceptional merit of his own, the French were coming to the brink of a civil war. Although I was scarcely ten years old at the time, I am sincerely convinced that my direct contact with a debate such as this one fostered in me the need to reach a sphere wherein such conflicts might be transcended.

Still more significant and determinative was an event of a private nature which happened a few years later within my own family. I am referring to the divorce of one of my uncles, a brother of my mother. This divorce caused distressing differences of opinion between two of my closest of kin, my grandmother on my mother's side, and my father. Although my father was not at all friendly with his brother-in-law, he had cultivated a friendship with my uncle's wife, based on their mutual love of music. On the other hand, my grandmother, as was to be expected, took the side of her son. This situation upset me all the more since my uncle and my aunt had a daughter of whom I was very fond and whom I knew would suffer from the consequences of the divorce. I am certain that I am not mistaken when I say that this experience strengthened my need to reach a certain level where I might somehow escape from myself and from my own self-enclosedness. At this level, I would be able to perceive reality simultaneously from several contrasting points of view, which in life are excluded.

One might be tempted to say that thought, and especially philosophy, has as its goal a many-sided understanding. But I believe, in fact, that this is an illusion, and that philosophy, to the extent that it attempts to elaborate syntheses, risks always losing contact with the individual as such. I think, as far as I can tell, that the reason dialogue held such a magic sway over me even as a small child is that it seemed to confer to its author the magical gift of being at once himself and another person. It is true that there has existed ever since Plato the philosophical dialogue which is absolutely different from dramatic dialogue: dialectic seemed to me to be faulty, to be a sort of dummy, in so far as it is a process used as a means to demonstrate a way of thought that is headstrong and anxious to assert itself. Dialogue as I conceived it then, and as I conceive it to this day, has a completely different nature. It supposes that the author, that the playwright, removes his own personality in some way in order to provide a place for autonomous beings and their intercourse.

I have since frequently emphasized that it is possible to recognize or discern better the characteristic features of a dramatic work from the theological point of view. I am referring to the act by which God the creator is believed to leave a margin of room within which individuals can appear and develop freely. I am convinced that a similar *kenosis* is inherent in the phenomenon one must call the dramatic action.

It is easy, however, to see how this radically excludes any didacticism. For didacticism conflictingly implies the active and essentially indiscreet intervention of the author, and in an even more pernicious way, the intervention of that advocacy for which the playwright is but the mask.

But what it is most important to grasp in the

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view which I am attempting to clarify is that the finality or end of a dramatic work is in a kind of inward promotion which in no way reduces itself to the development either of learning or of a purely intellectual understanding as is the case in the philosophical dialogue which differs from a treatise only by virtue of its form. In a sense, it is truly an encounter which the playwright must bring to life.

One might ask whether this encounter is with others or with oneself? Astonishingly, indeed, this conflict between oneself and another is transcended here. The playwright worthy of this name commands the ability to make the spectator recognize himself in the confrontations of the persons presented to him, and who live before him. And by the same stroke, the spectator is raised to a superior level of being, because in this specially invested spot which is the theater, the barrier, which separates people from each other, finds itself overturned. And thus the spectator is wrenched from himself, so to speak. But let us notice that this alone would not be complete. There is, for instance, a superficial and indeed vulgar pathos which implies that one is torn away from oneself. But authentic tragedy sharply differs from this pathos, because it implies, just as much as the going beyond the self of which I have spoken, the arrival to a superior level of consciousness. I stress the fact, however, that this superior consciousness does not necessarily grow into discursive thought: this is extremely unusual indeed. Let me mention that in this respect there is a profound similarity and affinity between the type of theater to which I have myself been devoted and about which I am thinking, and music, which establishes itself on a level much higher than the pure impressions of the senses, but yet cannot be translated into intellectual formulae. This is true I think, for instance, of works such as Beethoven's late String Quartets or Schubert's Quintet with two violoncelli, or, in another register, of Fauré's last works, which seem to me to be the high points of French music.

THE TERM TRANSCENDENCE, which has been recently so much abused and has so regrettably deviated from its meaning, conveys to my mind, very correctly, the process which lifts man's thought above the sphere of desire and of ownership, which is the sphere of immediate conflicts, in order to reach a superior serenity. But let us be careful that this superior serenity not be cold and far away, as could be termed that of the ancient sage, for this serenity retains within itself something of the fevers or the sufferings over which it has triumphed, and this is the same as saying that it *is*, in the strongest sense of the word, *compassion*.

This should not, I believe, be lost from sight, if, as it is proper for us to do here, we put stress upon the bearing of the dramatic work as a liberator.

I should add, perhaps, that this liberation must take place in two different ways: first of all, it is to permit the individual to extricate himself from the *social* pressure exerted upon him by the various groups to which he belongs. This pressure expresses itself in a conformity whose characteristics would closely approximate those of automation if it were not that very often the individual finds himself stretched between conformities which pull him in several directions at once. Confusion is the most frequent result of this situation. The work of art, and specifically the dramatic work, can effectively help him to step out of this confusion and thus to become himself.

There exists, on the other hand, another much less tangible condition of servitude which is constituted by the psychological conditions: it can be said that at the start, each one of us is the prisoner of his own tendencies. Moreover, these tendencies are rooted in the distant past. The unquestionable merit of psychoanalysis has been to bring this to its full light. The drama, in this same sphere, projects an indirect light upon these, our shadowy depths, and thereby helps us to reach a state where the personality ceases to identify itself with the initial ego.

From this point of view, it is not surprising that some playwrights, such as Lenormand in France and O'Neill in America (especially in *Strange Interlude*), have devoted their talents toward the ends of psychoanalysis. A play such as Lenormand's *Le Mangeur de Rêves* seems to be literal commentary upon Freud's early works.

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One must also recognize that both of the authors just mentioned successfully avoided what I consider a very tempting mistake. One will ask, why a mistake? A mistake because the author of drama here again is alienating to some extent his own freedom if he can no longer prevent himself from casting his own characters directly from the moulds of psychoanalytic thought. One sees that the basic danger is always the same—and a bit of thought reveals that it must be extremely difficult indeed for the playwright to resist the temptation to look for a foothold outside of his own imagination. In my play, *Le Coeur des Autres*, the playwright, Daniel Meyrieux, says that he envies the scholar because his purpose is to deal with a reality which will answer his questions. In other words, he envies the scholar because he is engaged in a search which will legitimately admit of verifications. It is certain, too, that the author of drama needs some confirmation, and moreover, I have found this to be true in my own experience as a playwright. I have always experienced great joy when, someone, after seeing or reading one of my plays, has said to me: I know a situation which corresponds exactly to what you have shown on the stage: or, I would believe that you knew him. And inversely, if I conceive of persons and situations which in their uniqueness, are of such a nature that the spectators not only do not know any analogy, but even are truly unable to give credence, then I should not fail to feel a certain uneasiness.

Given these conditions, one will undoubtedly say, would it not be best to recommend that the playwright invariably choose as starting points situations known to him from his own experience?

If I am to judge from my experience and from whatever I have been able to observe in other authors of drama, I find it necessary to beware of viewing this as an imperative or a foolproof method: it seems clear, although it is impossible to generalize in all certainty, that the imagination of the playwright tends to be stimulated more by something of which he has been given a glimpse in a kind of penumbra, and which leads him on to conjecture and to divine, rather than by the people whom he has come to know as such. I shall go so far as to say the following: even if real situations as such do not directly paralyze the imagination, the paralyzing action of more or less arbitrarily modifying reality must of necessity constrain it. And modifications must be performed in order to avoid that the persons concerned recognize themselves, so that there be no risk of scandalous consequences on the practical or even the judiciary level.

The essential question still remains the same: How, then, *does* the playwright succeed in bringing people to life on the stage? It is all too obvious that this question will not, strictly speaking, admit of a solution. There are no tricks of the trade for bringing a person to life. It can be said without the slightest exaggeration that the use of any technique *per se* in this realm would be self-defeating. It is certainly more reasonable to point out the obstacles which almost inevitably confront the beginner. As in so many other instances, the primary danger seems to me to be to comply with one's own desire to use one's own creations purely as vehicles for the pretty words in which one luxuriates. Therefore, to speak negatively first, the playwright must be on his guard against this temptation. Making positively constructive suggestions, I agree with the classics in the belief that the author of drama must above all be observant. Truly, he must be a careful observer, yet his observations differ sharply from those of the scholar. Some naturalistic playwrights made the mistake of being insufficiently sensitive to this difference. I feel very strongly that no genuine observation can be made without Love. For, in a sense, Love is mingled with the art of poetry itself. On the contemporary scene, I think that the Irish playwrights, above all Synge, but also Sean O'Casey, are among those who have most successfully done this. Another example among contemporary playwrights is the Lorca of *Blood Wedding* and *The House of Bernarda Alba*. These are, to my mind, extremely significant examples for the following reason. Spain as well as Ireland are countries whose people have maintained their identity. In these countries, the native traditions are still alive; in short, the people have resisted the leveling or depersonalizing forces which large cities impose upon those who are

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compelled to live in them. It is impossible for me to see any one of the works to which I have just alluded without having the sensation that a fountain of life bursts forth before me, and the secret of the poetry lies in the fact that even without ever having lived in Ireland or Spain, and I might add, in Chekov's Russia, we experience inside ourselves a deep concern for this world of people, so alive and vivid, which is set up before us. At the extreme, this feeling can ally itself to a kind of unconscious recollection, which it is superficial to dismiss as illusionary. For here, we have crossed the frontier between truth and illusion.

In matters which concern me, since I have undertaken to refer to my personal experience as much as possible, I will admit that both in my experience and in my plays, I am distressed to feel the absence of this nourishing soil which has given birth to so many of the dramatic creations which I admire. And indeed, I am tempted to ask myself by what indirect means I have attempted to compensate for its absence. After thinking about it, I should dare say that it is music, the experience of music which goes back to the very roots of my life, which has held the place of a ground soil for me. For the sidewalk of a big city and even the gravel of a public garden, contain nothing whatsoever of what can be truly called a ground soil. But music can be one. It seems to me that music can be an inner soil, fertile with nutrient sap.

I confess that what seems perhaps the most disappointing thing about the so-called "avant-garde" theater, is that it is totally bereft of ground soil. One nearly always has the impression that it is conceived from a cafe table. I say a cafe and not a pub—which is another thing altogether. This is exactly what I recall having said about the world as Sartre sees it. I said that I thought that it was the world as seen from a cafe. I think that he heard this remark, and he replied "Why not?" Well, why not? I shall take care not to underestimate the merit of Sartre's best plays, especially *No Exit* and *The Dirty Hands*. He *has* achieved the remarkable feat of reconciling dialectic with life to some extent. And in this achievement, these particular works of his are, in my opinion, perhaps unequaled. But there is the ever-present danger that in the final result, life may be sacrificed for the idea, as it is in *The Devil and the Good Lord*, and as it also tends to be in his most recent play, the *Condemned of Altona*. For this reason, I should say that Sartre, even in his best works, sets us a dangerous example, because he tempts the man who would imitate him to sacrifice individual beings for the Idea.

I should express myself in a slightly different manner on the subject of the plays of Beckett, or Ionesco, or of the large number of young playwrights who seem to want to follow in their footsteps, and I must confess that, on the whole, I am much more critical of them. While I admit that *Waiting for Godot* is based upon an experience that is real and tragic, I deplore that one finds in it nothing that resembles a discernible structure. And let me add that I find elements of sadism in the scene of the clown, which are personally distasteful to me.

Concerning Ionesco, I confess that I find what I should truly call theatrical material only in the last part of *The Killer* and in *Rhinoceros*. It is true, at any rate, that in all this theater, I deplore the total absence of music, and by that, I mean, as you must have realized by now, the total absence of a sense of the warmth between persons and in their attachments to each other.

A *genre* of theater such as this brings me neither the entertainment which I find in the real comedies, so rarely written today, nor the kind of spiritual sustenance and elevation which I have tried to define, and which abounds in the work of Ugo Betti whom I believe remains underrecognized on the contemporary scene.

Let me say a word about the contemporary American playwrights, without even discussing O'Neill, whose achievement seems to me to be of primary importance, particularly the works of his which were published after his death. I greatly admire Arthur Miller, and also Tennessee Williams, although about the latter, I am skeptical of his complexes which seem to me to paralyze his inspiration ofttimes. But, in any case, I am convinced that on the whole, the works of playwrights such as these indicate that they have been true to the ideals which I have taken upon myself to evoke in this talk.

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Seymour Cain

GABRIEL MARCEL: an evaluation

HALF A CENTURY AGO Marcel began his prophetic protest against "official" philosophy and the idolatry of "verification." He fought against the dogma that only what can be related to the so-called "normal" and "universal" conditions of experience may be regarded as real and meaningful. This criterion effectively denied existence to the philosophic consciousness of whole realms of experience, both below and above the "verifiable." Some of the highest and deepest, as well as the most primal, experiences of human beings were thereby ruled out or reduced and falsified to fit into the rubrics of an accepted "normality" and "verifiability." A philosophy thus restricted, Marcel was convinced, whatever its merits in certain specialized realms of inquiry, has nothing essentially to do with living, incarnate man in his concrete situation in the world, with his vocation to become himself and to connect with reality. The genuine philosopher is called upon to discover or recognize truth through the patient and sensitive fathoming of his own deepest personal experience, and thereby to arrive at the common ground of truth—aided by the open dialogue, the interchange of "calls" and "responses" with his fellow men.

Against the "official" mutilation and falsification of experienced reality, Marcel, therefore, allied himself with the 19th century rebels, such as Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche, who, through their example as well as their words, called on the philosopher to give up the pose of being a philosopher "as such," a mere *Fachmensch* or specialist, and to acknowledge instead that he is the particular person he is, with his particular experience, and to speak from his particular situation. Any true grasp of philosophical problems requires personal exigence and struggle; for philosophy in this large, human sense cannot be objectively appropriated or transmitted. The philosopher must philosophize here and now, naked and unarmoured, constantly open and vul-

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nerable to the "shock" of reality, always astonished by its "bite," continually its "prey," rather than comfortably installed in some traditional, conventional, or currently fashionable safety island above the human condition.

"Philosophy," Marcel has said, "is an uplifting of experience, not its castration."[1] It was to this uplifting of experience and against its castration that he directed his philosophical quest. He summoned up the image of a "metaphysical Atlantis," submerged below the surface of conventional and academic consciousness, which it is the task of the philosopher to touch upon at its rare and illuminable "outcroppings," and thereby to restore the lost wholeness of human reality, with its roots in bodily existence and its intention toward being.[2] Hence Marcel's persistent attempt, beginning with the meditations in the *Metaphysical Journal*, to illuminate areas of human experience that are the most difficult and refractory to rational analysis and usually the most neglected by conventional philosophy.

Marcel's remarkable accomplishment in restoring to us our lost Atlantis, in revivifying the comatose and darkened sectors of our experience through the investigation and reclaiming of his own, has been narrated in the preceding chapters. This work of prophetic protest and creative elucidation originated in a particular historical hour and is marked in many of its details and concerns by the intellectual situation in which Marcel found himself. That situation has changed in many respects. The historical and even the psychological study of religion can no longer be justly represented by the positivistic caricature which Marcel drew in the *Metaphysical Journal* and his play *Grace*. Human and social studies have displayed an increasing sensitivity, depth, and openness to the actual life of concrete human beings. Existential and phenomenological philosophies dominate the scene in continental Europe and have penetrated theological faculties and intellectual circles even in Britain and the United States.

Nevertheless, we still have to struggle, like Marcel, against new officialdoms and idolatries that have arisen or threaten to arise. The hard-won insights and intuitions which he attained through a painful and tortuous personal struggle may now have become the catchwords of a new "official" philosophy, a new scholasticism *à la mode*. A "dialogistics" may be envisaged which is more likely to be the barrier than the road to true dialogue and an understanding of dialogue; and a systematic "existology" which is more likely to lead to a new ossification and dogmatics, to a new "scholarization," than to personal existence and concrete awareness. Besides, we of the English-speaking world face as bleak a philosophical prospect as ever confronted Marcel when he began his quest: the idol of "verification" in its positivistic form is still very much with us, and the analysis of language, a game of small gains and little risk, dominates the philosophic scene, almost to the exclusion of the fathoming and illumination of concrete human existence. A new restrictive covenant seems to be in the making, limiting what is meaningful and communicable in human experience to what is so validated by the protagonists of the dominant school of philosophy—at the moment—in British and American universities. Whenever and wherever such restrictive covenants exist, belying our actual existence and experience and stifling our intellectual awareness and expression, Marcel's creative protest becomes relevant and must be renewed; he presents us with a persistent witness, example, and challenge.

And, it should be stressed, this new restrictive covenant is not only vicious and intolerable as far as our individual existence and consciousness is concerned, but is immeasurably more so as it cuts us off from communication with the common existence of mankind, with those who have gone before us and those who will come after us—with the ancients and the primitives, and, assuming that man is to remain man, with the man of the future too. The patrimony "recuperated" by Marcel is potentially present in each of us, connecting us with the past and the future by opening us to the depths of our own existence. Such a restoration and liberation serves to rescue us from the solipsism of the present socio-historical moment and its intellectual fashions.

[1] *Du Refus à l'invocation* (Paris: Gallinard, 1940), p. 109.
[2] See ibid., p. 124.

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However, as Marcel has noted, traditional rationalism, Stoicism, Spinozism and Thomism also mutilate and falsify our experience of reality. These traditional philosophical movements, which often deny our concrete, historic, incarnate, personal existence even more effectively and completely than modern empiricism and positivism, have displayed enduring strength, as witnessed by their periodic revivals in modern times. Although these traditional ways of thought started originally in some authentic and concrete response to reality, they have degenerated through centuries of parrot-philosophizing into scholastic apparatuses, spiritless commentaries and the various "isms" and neo-"isms" which shut off rather than spread the original light.

As against this, Marcel offers the way of "concrete philosophy," which concentrates solely on the transmutation, deepening, and illumination of the philosopher's own situation and experience. Such a philosophy, however, is not thereby "subjectivist" either in its intention or its result. The quest and the experience in this case have been Marcel's, and his way has often been a lonely as well as a tortuous one; but he has never been interested merely in singing the song of himself, in some limited, egotistic, solipsist sense. As Paul Ricoeur has pointed out, the *Metaphysical Journal* is not a *journal intime*, a private diary that merely retails the acts and thoughts and feelings of Gabriel Marcel, but an investigation of the human condition, in which he shares with all men, an inquiry open to all of us.

Marcel has seen himself as making "calls" through his published meditations and expectantly awaiting "responses," relying on our community of condition and the common bond of intersubjectivity for a free and uncoerced agreement. (A Hume today, he once remarked, would call his work *A Treatise on the Human Condition*.) An appeal to the common element in our intuitions and experiences is as important in his thought as is the constant stress on specific disposition and receptivity; for, indeed, the latter, though not for "anyone"—for the anonymous, untouched, external spectator-in-general—are open to all men. Like Socrates in Plato's *Gorgias*, Marcel has looked to a community of feelings to assure a communication of impressions and experience between men. That is one of the reasons why he has preferred to be known as a "neo-Socratic" or a "Christian Socratic" rather than as an existentialist, finding an affinity with Socrates' interrogative, dialogical stance, his constant address to a concrete *thou*, and his depreciation of "any kind of physics" as irrelevant to ultimate human concerns.[1]

The works of this unpretentious philosopher of personal experience are expressed for the most part in fragmentary meditations and essays ("attempts"), but they cover a lot of ground and deal with many of the areas that have long been the objects of philosophic inquiry. Careful investigators will find in Marcel's works an ethics, an aesthetics, an epistemology and a social philosophy, as well as a philosophy of religion and a doctrine of personal existence. Marcel has no natural philosophy in the traditional sense, nor does modern scientific knowledge play an important role in his thought. He has no philosophy *about nature*, about the physical cosmos, about the structure of the universe; but he does have something significant to say *about man's relation to nature*. Some of the most notable essays in *Homo Viator* are concerned with the bond between man and the natural world, with the cosmic piety which Marcel considers essential for a spiritually whole and healthy human existence, as "the only true *vinculum* which can bind men together."[2] Marcel has resolutely opposed any eschatological, pessimistic form of Christianity, or any mystical withdrawal which "unhallows" the natural world and the lived reality of human existence and thus cuts man off from the natural basis of ethics and religion. This stress distinguishes Marcel's thought from the type of existentialist philosophy which disregards or opposes the natural world or sees it in its inmost core as *Dreck*. We should also recall that Marcel has offered a phenomenological and existential interpretation of the role of the body in human life through his elucidation of man as an incarnate being and a being in situation.

[1] See Preface to *Metaphysical Journal* (Chicago: Regnery, 1952), p. xiii.

[2] *Homo Viator* (Chicago: Regnery, 1952), p. 162.

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This constant affirmation of the positive value and meaning of the natural world tends to dispel in part the apprehensions arising from the Gnostic overtones of certain statements in his works, which point yearningly toward the transcendence in a perfect "beyond" of an evil and cracked world order. Perhaps the ghost of Gnosticism with its two-worlds doctrine lurks temptingly at the shoulder of every serious Christian thinker. Alive to these implications, Marcel has declared that he espouses an ethical, not a metaphysical, dualism, a practical rather than a theoretical Manichæism.[1] His "beyond," he asserts, is not literally supraterrestrial, not some other place, but an unknown and higher dimension of reality, attainable in and through human experience and existence. In an illuminating discussion of his plays, entitled "The Drama of the Soul in Exile," Marcel traces the peculiar union of the immediate and the transcendental in his thought and categorically rejects any implication of Platonic dualism. "For me, the soul in exile is the soul which has become a stranger to itself, which can no longer understand itself, which has lost its way, . . ." in contrast with the soul of "Platonists throughout the ages . . . the soul, sunk after some scarcely imaginable spiritual disaster, in the darkness of the world of sense and aspiring to expand once more in some intelligible empyrean."[2]

MARCEL HAS ALSO AFFIRMED the positive value of reason, that is, of objective rational thought. However, his evaluation of "objectivity" and "primary reflection" and his interpretation of their relation to "participation" and "secondary reflection" are often obscure, eliciting objections from such sympathetic and perceptive interpreters of his thought as Troisfontaines and Ricoeur. His discussion of the realm of objectivity, *it*, and the verifiable in the early period when he hewed out the main roads of his thought is markedly pejorative in tone. In his polemic against absolute idealism and empirical positivism, Marcel apparently became so completely absorbed in fighting against the unwholesome excesses and distortions of objectivity and in restoring the realm of *thou* and the unverifiable, that he paid little attention to the proper and wholesome role of rational analysis and abstractions in human thought, and the special applications of technical reason in human life. Not only a questionable denigration of natural human powers is thereby suggested, but a permanent split seems to be implied in the human wholeness which it has been Marcel's particular aim to restore.

Despite passing remarks acknowledging the validity and role of objective knowledge and detached analysis, Marcel's early, formative work is certainly vulnerable to such criticisms. Unlike a Whitehead or a Jaspers, Marcel has not been personally involved in the sciences of our time (save perhaps for his early interest in psychology) and has not followed attentively the new uses and developments of rational analysis and objectivity. (Ricoeur suggests that even in philosophy Marcel has not taken cognizance of the new epistemological developments, such as the Husserlian, beyond the idealist and positivist forms of objectivity.)

Aware of these criticisms, Marcel has attempted in his later years to clarify and defend his position in regard to abstractions and techniques (especially in *Men Against Humanity*, *The Decline of Wisdom*, and the Preface to Troisfontaines' monumental presentation of his thought[1]). Marcel's defence, in brief, is that he does affirm the positive role and value of rational analysis in the apprehension of reality, as well as the proper technical application of reason to fulfill the ends of human life. What he opposes, he says, is not abstraction, but "the spirit of abstraction" which sets up abstractions in place of the concrete reality they are designed to illuminate and which imprisons us at the stage of primary, separative analysis and prevents us from going on to the stage of secondary, integrative reflection and a higher and richer level of concrete reality. Marcel's emphasis, we see, is still on the restoration of integral reality, on therapy, while the connection or collaboration between the two modes of levels, the

[1] *Man Against Mass-Society* (Chicago: Regnery, 1952), p. 92f.
[2] *Three Plays* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1958), p. 16.

[1] Roger Troisfontaines, *De l'existence à l'être: la philosophie de Gabriel Marcel*. 2 vols. Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1953, and Paris: Vrin, 1953.

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theory, remains obscure and elusive. In the Preface to Troisfontaines, for instance, Marcel sees the necessity for finding and illuminating the connection between the body/object and the body/self, between the technically manipulable and the charismatically affectable perspectives of the body, but he leaves the connection open and yet to be disclosed. Marcel has no interest in systematically coordinating the various levels of reality or modes of awareness, in order to attain a synoptic vision of the whole. He has never considered this to be the work that he was called upon to do.

More important than the achievement or non-achievement of a systematic metaphysics or epistemology, however, in terms of Marcel's own thought, is the meaning and value of rational analysis and abstractions in the spiritual life of the concrete inquirer. In the Preface to Troisfontaines, the empirical scientist is portrayed as engaged with only a part of his being, as against the true philosopher who is engaged with his whole being. Granted that the abstractive and analytical is a special function of the human spirit, and that the philosopher in Marcel's sense works concretely and integrally, with all his parts, this seems to be a plausible statement. Yet, again in terms of Marcel's own thought, it raises certain significant questions. Can abstract thought too be the medium, the form of expression, of an existentially rooted drive toward ontological participation? Is not something like this the basic intention of the great philosophers of the past—of an Aristotle and an Aquinas, and also of a Plato and a Descartes? Can what Marcel calls "the whole being" be committed and involved in the life-vocation of abstract thought?

A similar line of questioning was indicated many years ago by Franz Rosenzweig, another religious existentialist and concrete philosopher, when he conceded that the rarefied, abstract arguments for God's existence were originally "honest knowledge," rooted in an actual human situation and of concern to concrete men. Granted that the abstractions are remote from the living God, says Rosenzweig, it is not the "nearness" or "remoteness" that is essential, but the intention and the concern (the mutual concern between man and God), for,

> . . . even at a very great distance, the burning gaze of God and man fuse in such a way that the coldest abstractions grow warm in the mouth of Maimonides or Hermann Cohen—warmer than all our agonized drivel . . . What matters is that, near or remote, whatever is uttered is uttered before God, with the "Thou" . . . that never turns away.[1]

Marcel has of course been aware that merely crying, "Existence! Existence!" will not bring us into the kingdom of human reality (many of his plays reveal the dangerous pitfalls of such spiritual inauthenticity and pretentiousness), and he has acknowledged the ontological intention and concrete rootedness of the great abstract thinkers of the past (although again he has not spelled this out or emphasized it at any length). He has also noted the personal role of the scientist in research, maintaining that "the person of the scientist with all his good and bad powers" is engaged in his work, and that this has a marked "personal and dramatic" quality, involving not merely the impersonal march of science, but "the realization of an individual destiny."[2]

But here again it is not empirical science or scientific scholarship or the famous "laboratory experiment" that is the basis of Marcel's thought—but intimate personal experience, to which he appeals as common ground, referent, and "proof." He calls to each individual person, scientist or not, to look into himself and his life, to "taste," as the Psalmist says, and thereby realize his existence and his destiny. Through the way of friendly persuasion and concrete evocation, the way of call and response, he points to the common universal ground of integral personal experience, the matrix from which all else that is human is derived, the constant point of origin and return.

[1] *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought.* Presented by Nahum N. Glatzer. New York: Schocken Books (Farrar, Strauss, and Young), 1953, p. 280f.

[2] *Du Refus a l'invocation*, p. 45f.

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STONE IN THE RIVER

By
Harry Stiehl

I

THE RIVER WAS NAMED PEDERNALES, meaning *flints*, but the boy always called it Stone-in-the-River. He was thirteen when he first saw it: a mud-snaking thing that in flood-time hurled boulders in its swollen anger, hurled trunks and torsos of houses, swept over trees so that only their topmost arching arms sourced over it in lamentation, wept as over beautiful blind Jerusalem, *Quomodo sedet sola civitas*, or the Cities of the Plain. But when he first saw it—greengold, opalescent, shimmering when the chinaberries skimmed on its surface—and the trees along its banks in high August were women-harps of murmuring strummed leaves, he stopped still in wonder.

He had come up from San Antonio to this branching ranch country of cedar and liveoak and mesquite in August just to "look around," for his mother had bought a section of land up here, but he was going back in the autumn to a school in San Antonio, to a grubby priests's-school held in the Archbishop's parochial palm, where, as his father's sisters, aunts, genteel German ostriches, said, narrowing their already-narrow eyes, he would have to go to school with "Messicans and other Papist trash."

"Trash yourself," he wanted to say, but always suppressed it, for his mother had raised him to be Mother's little gentleman who would stand up and pull out chairs for ladies and open doors discreetly, the Texas threat to Little Lord Fauntleroy, and who would say in later years to friends and connection, kith and kin and lovers, Have-another-mint-Honey, in a taught Southron voice, but who, when he first went to school "among Texans" evoked only exasperated awe among the boys his age—salt creatures adept at the secrets of Sex—Jesus, do you come from England or something? He had come from the Dutch West Indies where he had observed the lemon-cheeked expatriate Chelsea ladies preside over the tea-service of four-o'clock-sharp with afflicted elegance and whose Lytton-Virginia-Forster effeteness he had aped with open snobbishness, so that he spoke always with the purest sighing AHS and OES, harps of sound, and he discriminated for discrimination's sake.

He stood still, stopped in wonder. The chinaberries, yellow as shrivelling tallow-drops, plopped into the water, "repeating three clear tones," and the mockingbirds called in the high August country to the nameless presences of the air, What do you say, say, say? He could say nothing, but stood with his mother and his sister in their city finery, and thought, It's ours.

His mother stirred at his side, rustled, cool in her lime linen, scandalous too, but it was too hot for widow-weeds, and she was "swept-out with grieving, any ways." She said to Lawrence's sister, "Bea, honey, give me your hanky, think I smudged myself coming through this jungle," for she was always the white-gloves-and-green-tea girl even in the doldrums of mourning, and her coquetry before her dazzled son was, as the aunts said, Jezebel stuff. Beatrice handed over her handkerchief. She was fifteen with straw-straight hair frizzled into starlet curls except where the babyish bangs fell forward over the broad innocent brow. She had cool sometimes-grey, sometimes-green eyes and a sizzling figure shortly to cut its swath through a swarm of boys, who would

This is the introduction to a three-part novella. Parts II and III will appear in subsequent issues.

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moon after her saying, Bea-Bea, honey, let me taste your honey.

The river shimmered, mirroring light. Wasps and bees, dusty with light, glittered, swam lazily through the haze. He could see a sweep of hills, a swan-flight of summer fields where the corn dried, the desiccate leaves hanging down like hands, dusty, dejected, and the rise, the caliche-streaked beginning, to the boulders, to the granite-scarred bluff, rolling north to the Enchanted Mountain, "site of the famous Comanche Raid against the Texas Rangers." He had been there, to the north, earlier in the day, with his aunt and his favourite uncle.

There, in the autumn, the aunts said, the haws hung purple, and in autumns to come he was to see them, ghost-blooded sockets of October twilight, when he would hunt with his uncle in the hills, Uncle Jake who had carved tombstones for his father in San Antonio during the earning-my-daily-bread days, but who had now retired home to the hills where he was born, to sit among his chickens and pigpens and smokehouses and watercress creeks, while Aunt Lolly poked and piddled in the sweetpotato-petunia patch, scrabbling up "them yum-yum yams" to be served, smoking, on a smear of country butter. Uncle Jake was a dry-going easy-humoured man dithering vaguely through the like-one-another days, but Aunt Lolly was always after him, never letting him rest-a-spell on the coming-apart porch where the honeysuckle vined among hummingbird blurs and the sunflowers disked their wheels of seed, but was always croaking after him, Jacob, Jacob, do this and do that and don't do *that*, so that he almost wished he was back among the tombstones, carving, or, better, under one of them, if he hadn't known that Aunt Lolly would come dry-eyed and prissy in her poke-bonnet to poke the maidenfern-mosshair roses into the granite urns by the Methodist moderate Angel, and say, Jacob, Jacob, w-i-i-i-i-i-i-i-de you ever do that?

JACOB'S FATHER, HEINRICH BRAUN, had carved tombstones too, and before that he had been a Methodist circuit rider, circulating round and about through the German settlements on the Edwards Plateau in central Texas. Heinrich had been born in one of those settlements; so had Jacob; so had the boy's father, Robert Braun, dead in the West Indies but buried in San Antonio beside Heinrich, old Grandfather Braun. Heinrich had started as a circuit rider, had then branched out into the tombstone trade, and had kept it as a lucrative sideline in his grand old age when he blossomed out into a full-blown blustering Minister, scaring so many of his congregation with his sulphur fulminations that part of them broke off, formed another branch, set up a rival Methodist racket, and hired a reformed-Unitarian Northerner to fan the gentle monotony of their late Sunday mornings with mildly imprecating, camomile-tea sermons.

The boy had never known Grandfather Braun, who had died in 1925, but the boy's mother remembered him, what a warlock *he* was, what a beastly old Prussian tyrant, what a dehydrated Bismarck of a man. Grandfather Braun's grandfather had fought and died under Blücher, and his father, born just before Waterloo, had been "in the Prussian Guard," had had a skull shako and all, and had been disgraced in some foiled military coup, and had skipped the country to come to Texas in 1848 with his apfel-cheeked bride. Grandfather Braun had been born in the following year, 1849.

"What a bore it all is," the boy's mother used to sigh, "just because they fought with Blücher," and she pronounced it purposely to rhyme with *butcher*, "and sassed old Metternich, *ce vieux squélette gélé*, and lost all their possessions, and," she went on with astringent invention, "just because they were given the Luther Holy Medal for driving the druids out of Germany, they think they can queen it over everybody. I'll grant you that the sons *are* handsome upstanding braw laddies, including the one I married, but they're most of them drunkards and shiftless-genteel neo-illiterates. Now, Jacob," and this last lovingly, for she dearly loved Jacob, "now, isn't it so?" And Jacob would have to agree.

They had left Jacob back at the car, a high-riding, heavy-as-hell, funeral-black Fleetwood with fawn-serge interiors and pseudo-saint's-niches for flowers. Jacob had said, when they had

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asked him to walk to the river, "It's too hot for white folks and I've seen the Pedernales. Just you follow the path, Susan, and I'll sit here and rest a spell," not wanting to admit that he, lately, had begun to feel his seventy years, what with Aunt Lolly coming after him all the time like a thin ghost, Jacob, Jacob. So they had come by themselves, the trio, the path being easy to follow, despite Susan's remark on the way that it was "thick as the jungles of Venezuela," where her own parents still lived in exiled monotony, French-Irish lapsed Catholics from New Orleans, still a-working for Rockefeller. They had come to inspect their river.

Staring at what they owned now, at their section of land, at their part of the river with chinaberries plopping into it, they drew together in sympathy, united as they had not been since the spring, since the death of the father, and the widow Susan Braun, smiling at her daughter Beatrice and at her son Lawrence, said finally, "I hope you kids will like it, I hope I did right," and Beatrice answered sing-song, that it was lovely, even if it *was* way out in the sticks, and the son suggested, in measured considering tones, that it was like a little slice of Americana.

THE WIDOWED MOTHER was thirty-three. At the age of fifty, her husband had suddenly collapsed and died "in the Islands." He had been born in this Texas country, had served in the cavalry in what was now called the First World War instead of the Great War, had gone to Mexico afterwards as a minion in the Rockefeller empire, and had risen to be a "director," a jefe, in the foreign operations. He had met and married Susan in Tampico.

"Those were the days," Susan would say, "what an innocent I was then, with my little wide-eyed convent sobriety and my idea of sin as women-smoking-in-public. And here were all these fancy bachelors drinking themselves into public dis-integration, and lamenting that they weren't back in the States. As if there they would have had girls sprawling all over them, as the Mexican girls did, and as if most of them weren't spawned in the underbelly of Pittsburgh or some other Yankee burg without even that proverbial pot to their name. So I married one of them, although *he* was a Southerner and of good family, Ludwig of Bavaria's Prussian-Texan poor relations, with a lost *schloss* in the Old Country and swan-and-huntress statues scattered impressively about, to hear them tell it, married him and tried to reform him and make him amount to something in the end. Well, he did, but he broke too, such a weak man. But those were the days, I should really write a book about it . . ." She was always going to write a book, but if you asked her whether she had ever tried to, she would say, Not yet. Her tastes in reading ran to Somerset Maugham and gossipy biographies and, especially, to murder fiction, which, during her Island days, she had devoured by the llama-load, spinning the pages by as she dipped her hand from time to time into the bedside bon-bons.

Susan had been married young, at seventeen, and Beatrice had arrived just enough later to make it respectable. (The grandmother had scanned the calendar, but it was all right.) By the time the boy was born, in 1927, and Susan was twenty, she was already tired of Tampico. There was absolutely NO place to go, except in a snail's-pace Pullman up to the Texas border to Brownsville or Laredo, or south to Vera Cruz. But then—*mirabile dictu!*—her husband had received a promotion in the Company, and there had been a giddily brief year and a half in Mexico City before, late in 1930, the Company was finally forced to abandon its Mexican concessions and, would you believe it, there were weeds growing in a year in the Tampico refineries "right through the asphalt." So the family removed with the Company to the West Indies, to an island off the Golfo de Maracaibo, where Susan's father worked for another branch of the Company, only he was a jefe of longer standing. Susan had enjoyed Mexico City, and would talk about it often.

What a city it had been in those days—before it was so tourist-infested with Kansas schoolteachers and Brooklyn Jews and bohemian ne'er-do-wells—when you could go down to the Alameda on a Sunday morning and listen to the band-concert with nothing but Spanish vocables showering round you in a fine, incomprehensible rain. The Funeral Market across the calle would be

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awash with dripping wreaths, all dismally identical, silver-wrapped, with the permanganate purple bleeding from the stained funerary leaves and the sellers pouring water on them periodically to keep them fresh in the morning heat. She would go on to Mass, down the calle, to the Cathedral, not because she was pious or ever communicated or even believed, but because she felt like it. And afterwards the flower-sellers in the Zócalo would be happily hawking the cut-this-morning blossoms for the Mass-going upper-class trade, and she would buy a boutonnière for Bob and push it sportily into the lapel of his Panama suit inside the cantina where he had spent most of the morning, and they would lunch at the Hotel Ritz or the old azulejo-tiled Sanborn's or, if they wanted to splurge, catch a cab over to the Reforma or to one of the French restaurants in the Paseo or the Calle Londres. The children would be at home with the criada, a caramel-skinned mestiza extravagantly fond of the son. (The criada, being female, slightly despised baby girls.)

And then, perhaps, after the long leisurely lunch, Susan and Bob would walk through Chapultepec Park until teatime, and if they didn't happen to quarrel, it would have been a beautiful Sunday, one to preserve and press away between the pages of some invisible book.

However, they often happened to quarrel. These skirmishes always came from the jealousy of Bob over Susan's supposed affairs, and they followed a set pattern, with charge and countercharge following one another pell-mell, and mounting to Susan's aggrieved recrimination about the amount of alcohol Bob was putting away, so he would shout back at her, until she would collapse into wordless tears, but would say, later, when she was lounging back at home on the settee, that she didn't know where it would all end, Bob having stormed off somewhere "to get good and slayed." And suddenly, she would have a migraine, the pain coming down on her like the tropical night, and she would lie up in her room like a white abandoned moth for days on end, with cologne-drenched linen on her exhausted eyelids, and the children being cared for by the criada, and Beatrice, who could walk well, having to tip-toe about the house. There was no lock on Susan's door, but Bob understood he must stay away at those times, because if he even came to inquire how she was getting on, Susan would turn on him her huge eyes of tragedy with their don't-come-near-me look.

The migraines seldom lasted beyond five days, for about Friday following the Sunday spat, Bob would come home at noon from the office where he had practically lived all week, and come upstairs with a bunch of flowers or a box of Whitman's Sampler chocolates that he had bought at Sanborn's, and would push open the door into the musty cavern where the princess lay . . . and come to the side of the Fairy Fourposter where she slept above her unbruised pea, and kiss away the thorns of her long terrible slumber, and say, Susan, honey, I'm sorry, only don't deny me, honey, don't deny me.

And she would wake, stir from the dust of her secret vigil, and welcome Bob and welcome the children while the criada ran the bath-water, and she would come down later to candlelight dinner in the French lace or a cool linen dress shaken with lime-flowers. Then she and Bob would go out, and the children would not see them until the following afternoon, when the criada would take them up to Mummy's room to see Mummy-and-Daddy together and be kissed goodbye before they were taken to the Park.

Beatrice was in her sixth year, and the boy in his fourth year, when the family left Mexico. That was the first week of November, 1930, and on El Día de los Difuntos, Susan went out to the Cemetery to watch the blessing of the graves. There, in the rented vaults, slumbered the unknown dead, divided into classes and groups still by the demarcation of wealth, with over the baronial Spanish names the opulent baroque Angels attended by clustering cherubim, and the Coplas of Jorge Manrique ("It's the Spanish Gray's Elegy," Bob had once explained) in swooning gilt script cut into marble, their stoical message on mutability a discreet rebuke to the ostentatious mementoes of the governing class. Further down the slope were the slabs of the small tienda-owners, with the fading photographs of the occupants enclosed in oval affairs of looped and swirled metal resembling monstrances. And then

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there were the narrow graves of the numberless *hijos de nadie*, with only a wooden cross and perhaps a sun-paled Guadalupana turning their shadows over a topping of white pebble. On that day in 1930, the Day of the Dead, Susan had as yet no real dead to mourn, for she could hardly remember her mother's mother who had "passed over" in New Orleans when Susan was just a little girl of five.

They came back from the Pedernales and climbed into Jacob's Fleetwood, the children chattering, the mother silent, and drove toward the town, Jacob singing some German songs as he spun the car with mortician expertise round sudden curves as they descended, past serried ridges of cedar, toward the valley.

The town. You have seen the town, the slumbering stone houses of central Texas with their rifle-slits for the Indian raids and the gingerbread scrollwork that was added on as the people prospered. If you passed into the houses, into Jacob's town house, you would go back—fifty, sixty, eighty years—into a place of high dark furniture, heavy waxed oak topped with pink marble and watched over by mirrors, long ovals of silence that echo the emptiness, one to another, invisible histories written into the good German glass of the people who had passed through the rooms, caballeros in cambric, las damas in brocade, the Spanish and German crossing, the cross of the swords on the wall, the loop of the shakos with their *Todtenkopf* emblems, and the stillness preserved in its prime.

There, the church-bells peal over the town, the Protestant bells and the great Catholic bell, so that the air at noon is bronzing with sound, like the bells in Mexico at Taxco and Puebla, and the Angelus comes morning-and-evening from the great Catholic bell, and sometimes its funeral toll —slow and correct and distinct—rung by Franciscans rides out in wide grace over the town. Funerals and weddings are meaningful here, ceremonies of joy, gusting into laughter and the regret of grief, and grief here has its nails, like the God on the nails, and its anfractuous shadows. Nor is the sinister neglected, nor the twisted and deprived, the secret sorrows that can never be told, the arrows that arrive in the night, out of nowhere, out of nothing: it is a town, you see, like any other.

And through the town, like others you have seen, rides the River, slow and wide here, choked and slow, like the River of Rivers as it meets its Delta. Here it is named Pedernales, meaning *flints*, and the stone bridges go over it, and into it all summer long weep the women-harps of the willows, the crepe myrtle and salt-cedar and the glittering chinaberry trees with their parabolas of shade, where three may linger in the diminishing amber of the long afternoon on a lawn by a fine town-house to look at the river and the stone bridges looping it, where a boy and his mother and sister may look at the leaves falling into the water of the river and swirling away like the years.

Spin the years forward, spin the years back: the tale of the years is a telling of voices, the mother and father, the son and the daughter, and a wake of widows, of grandmothers numberless, and what the aunts said, of Texas, the Islands, and of Mexico, lost. And the boy, like a bee in the amber, in the beads of his mother's amber, can peer down a panoply of ceremonious summers, forward and back in this high August summer, hearing the women-harps of the murmuring strummed leaves, and crying *Sanctus, Sanctus*, in his dusty Latin of the town and the river to the Stone-in-the-River like the tombs of the vanished in the river of all our dead.

II

Bitter aloes oozed from the cut chunky leaves, stacked like starfish in resinous black wooden troughs on the caliche arid hillside, oozed in droplets, glittering, glinting, as from the gold chalice the transubstantiated wine might fall to the priest's tongue in a perishable splash. Lignum vitae trees, hardest of woods, bent in the trade-winds where the boy, with his mother, walked. She was no more the Twenties beauty in the green cloche hat which lay with its burnt feathers in some dust-bin, lost, while the grainy kodaks which had, in the Lost Decade, fixed the woman and the hat in a stylized moment, yellowed now in the morocco album that the boy sometimes

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turned, pointing, exclaiming: at his sister in a Mexican garden, with a sandpail, bangs, and a baby-dress; at his father diving into the Huasteca Pool in Tampico; at his mother sitting, with tennis racquet and iced lemonade, under the striped Maracaibo beach umbrella. He was a small boy, herringbone-thin, so browned from the tropic sun that when his mother sometimes saw him trudging, back from the beach, up the Company asphalt roads, in his brown bathing-suit, he appeared to her to have on nothing at all.

They walked back to the hearse-high Packard and climbed in, his hands sticky with the empurpled sea-grapes, uvas, that he had been eating. Glittering in the candescent noon like a fragmented heliograph, the Packard moved away, dipped crossing the Spanish Lagoon, then whirled with increasing speed down the Oranjestadt road where his mother was to shop, in the Chinese stores, for jade and ivory.

The Packard meant little to him, for his father bought a new one every year—they came, lashed in tarpaulins, from New York on a Company tanker—but on their last vacation in the States, some boys his age had called out to one another, Look, geez, a new Packard! In the States something vague and terrible called The Depression was going on, and about it his parents talked in conspiratorial tones. Although they were, in effect, disenfranchised by their residence in the Dutch colony, his parents were strong Roosevelt supporters. In the election of last fall, the boy himself had favoured Landon, of whom he knew nothing, simply because the name sounded like London.

Lawrence was passionately Anglophile and had, with his mother, tea every afternoon at four-thirty, eating the chocolate biscuit and petit beurre and Swedish cakes as he stared past acacias, candelabra cactus, and pigeon-house across the coral to the lagoon two hundred yards away, the reef and the turquoise Caribbean.

Beyond, to the south, across a gulf which, every summer, he could see from the porthole of the oil tanker as he peered out at palm fronds marking the shifting and shallow currents and shoals, Maracaibo lay, a city of pink Le Corbusier architecture and yellow Moorish façades, where his mother's parents lived. His grandparents had plátanos and mangos, avocados and guava-trees, in their yard, but they did not have sea-grapes, his favourite, so what more could be said for Maracaibo? Of his grandparents, indeed, he thought very seldom, although his henna-haired grandmother (Lawrence and Beatrice had argued whether this were a true dye or only a rinse, and he had settled it by consulting the Brittannica to see that it was a dye, like Tyrian shell, and that the Egyptians had used it; the grandmother herself insisted that it was merely a rinse with which she "revived" her hair) came at least once a year to visit them, and she always brought him a present or a wild Venezuelan orchid for his collection. His grandfather was too busy with his work to come: he was alway flying over the jungle and the monte where the head-hunters lived; he checked on supplies in the individual Company camps encircling the lago.

Now, in the siesta light, they entered Oranjestadt, its red glazed roofs glittering mirrors of blood, the flamboyant trees between the houses and the shut shops dropping to the ground their clotting blossoms, orange with rot empurpled, and their glossy pods of beans. Beyond the quay bobbed fishing-boats. They had, of course, arrived at the wrong time for shopping. Everything would be shut, for the next two hours, against the heat, and even the Chinese merchants could not be routed out to display their laces and teakwood, their bronze temple bells and trumpeting ivory elephants or the flecked pale jade.

They went therefore to the Hotel whose German manager sometimes dined with them at their house in the Lago camp, arguing of the new Germany, for he was a passionate Nazi and spread the gospel at every opportunity. Fortunately, he was not in the coffee-room: the mother declared that he gave her a migraine with his statistics and steel-helmet Nietzscheanism and his technical know-how. (The German was, like Lawrence's mother, a camera enthusiast, and could manipulate lenses and Leicas with wearying mastery.)

They had chilled consommé, barracuda with lime, and hot Lipton's tea.

As they ate, Lawrence watched his mother's cartwheel yellow hat, sunflower straw, and her

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fingers flashing with rings: the wedding band and the amethyst solitaire that she had bought that spring, in Curaçao, when they waited for the Grace Liner as it moved on a leisurely tourist route through the Caribbean. They had gone from there to Cartagena, had visited the ruined convent above the city, where the black protected vultures clustered on the splintered ruins from whence, centuries ago, the nuns had leapt down a long ravine to escape Henry Morgan's men, who, bored with their shipside sodomy, were hungry as hawks for a woman. Coming back, down the slashed caliche hillside picked with cacti, they had seen the liner, riding sleekly expensive in the bay, beyond the coffee bodegas. The liner, with its swimming-pools and shops and tennis courts, had been, to Lawrence, a miracle, and he had never tired of the elegant dining-room with its menus in French and its dinner-music from the balconied orchestra and its weekly masquerade party with confetti and Chinese lanterns. It was in that dining-room that he had tasted, for the first and last time, breast of pheasant under glass. At home in the oil colony, his father raised for his personal amusement, pheasants, Phasis birds, and the homing pigeons that circled at evening, downward to darkness on extended wings, exactly as in the Wallace Stevens masterpiece. But his father's pheasants were never eaten. Iridescent, kingly, their tail-feathers trailing, they strode mincingly over gravel as if on bound feet. If the boy had been told then, what he had learned later, that while he ate breast of pheasant under glass, surfeited with a spurious Versailles luxury, men and women were standing in bread-lines in the States, angry and hopeless, he would not have understood, would have asked, his eyes widening, "Bread? Bread? But why don't they eat breast of pheasant under glass?"

He squeezed, now, the limes over the barracuda, a fish he loathed, but its name was so rakishly lovely that he could never resist it on a menu. His mother listlessly ate, for she had not wanted this luncheon and she had, he suspected, a faint migraine. Her migraines were famous and lasted, occasionally, for days. On those days he had to be very quiet, reading in the big Rockwell Kent *Shakespeare* or *Moby Dick*, hardly daring to turn a page that he might disturb his mother, make her come to her bedroom door, like a Fury in a niche, to cry that sharper than a barracuda's tooth was a noisy child. He was actually not noisy at all, unlike his sister who played football with tomboy verve on the neighbourhood team. Indeed, they could hardly get Lawrence to say a word when company was present. And though he looked, as one lady had declared, like "an insane little mouse," he was suspected of being intolerably brilliant, and they would have accused him of having a prodigious memory had he not, so disconcertingly often, forgotten to do or to learn dozens of ordinary things which everyone else could practically perform in his sleep.

On the summers that the children didn't go to Venezuela, they might accompany their parents on the regular Caribbean tour, circling the Greater and Lesser Antilles and Central America. If the father accompanied them, they would have to make the trip to Curaçao in a tiny Dutch tub; the mother and Lawrence would be prostrate in the stateroom with *mal-de-mer*, while the father and Beatrice would be roaming top-side. In Willemstadt, upon their arrival, they would stay in the Hotel Americano where there were large hot rooms to be had. The hotel balcony overlooked the ship canal. A pontoon-bridge spanned this canal; it was swung back from time to time to permit the passage of a ship. The father would sit drinking in the hotel bar, while the mother lay upstairs dazed with a faint migraine, and in the three days or so before they could all go aboard the luxury liner for their cruise, the children would be forced to invent games, utilizing what they could see: the portly burghers in the lobby, the orange tile roofs of the town beyond, the Governor's Palace on the point, and always, the ships passing and passing, the bridge swinging and swinging, on the ship canal, while the lobby fans whirred like wings of a wounded bird.

His mother talked to Lawrence during lunch of Mexico and Texas and New Orleans, places where she had lived, and her words for him wove themselves into a pattern. She had been educated in convents and could mercilessly mock the nuns' twittering piety, the little cliques and the cloister scandals. Her mimicry of a certain Mother Supe-

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rior was lethal but loving, *au coeur*: to listen to her was like reading the Canterbury Tales. She had not lost her faith, but had slowly "lapsed" from it, though she still went sometimes to the Church in Sint Nikolass or to the Cathedral in Oranjestadt, where the old Dutch Bishop spoke, in Papiamento, on faith and morals. In the matter of Spain and Abyssinia, however, she was militantly anticlerical and read with credulous delight many flat ephemeral pamphlets of the liberal camp with crude cartoons of bishops blessing cannons. She was, also, passionately pro-Jewish, although in the Lago colony she had little opportunity to demonstrate her humanitarian goodwill, for the Company personnel offices in New York screened tirelessly for Negroes, homosexuals, and Jews. Racial purity was the without-which-nothing of pre-eminence in executive echelons, and her husband had risen and risen in the Company under the benevolent smiles of his family's many Methodist ghosts.

When, after lunch, they found that they still had nearly an hour before the shops reopened, the mother suggested that they drive still further west, to the sea and the old lime orchards. These lime-trees seemed to Lawrence centuries old; they bore both blossoms and cool green fruit.

Mother and son walked under the patterning shade while the lime-blossoms drifted upon them, and the mother cried that it was exactly like the book they had begun to read together recently, an endless book by Proust that had come as a book-club "dividend." They had, in their garden in the Colony, acacia trees whose blossoms spiralled down, also, in a papery shimmer and whose winged seeds were blown across the trellised bougainvillea to the water-lilies of the gold-fish pool; on certain branches of these acacias, Lawrence had wired his orchids, whose air-fed leaves he watched anxiously for blooms, but for months and months on end he waited in vain while spiders spun tenuous webs along its air-fed leaves, along its roots like clustering chow-mein noodles.

From this land's-end-point, beyond the lime orchards, which at sunset would be dramatically encrimsoned, soaked in a great spreading stain of blood and dully glowing as stained-glass masses of jewels, they saw the tile-roofed mansion of a great financier, an Amsterdam Jew, and the mother who had once been invited there to a distinguished soirée, told her son a curious and bitter tale, which, decades later, in a winter foreign city, he would recall with that surge of melancholy tendresse which refreshes the withered heart.

Some years back, a young English girl, a beauty honey-lidded as Juventius, with mild violet eyes, had come to Aruba to marry the great Jew. She was installed in the finest hostel of Oranjestadt,—not in the hotel where the boy had eaten barracuda, but in a finer one that had since burned down. In the course of her presentation to Island society, which preceded her wedding, she met a young Company engineer and became so infatuated with him that, sick unto death, she wished indeed to die. He was, according to reports of disinterested observers, a quite commonplace young man with a certain expertise at tennis and a deep tan, but to her he was Adonis by the boar-hound slain between the yew trees. At the Nuptial Mass in the Roman Catholic Cathedral, for the Jew had embraced that distinguished Faith, she bent her neck before the priest like Anne Boleyn putting it on the block. And the headsman-Jew knelt by her, imperturbably, to whisper of the elegant recriminations with which he would repay her infidelity. But she, who could not be faithful *au coeur*, was determined not to falter before the eyes of men. She would be, immured in marriage, as chaste to the memory of her love as a prioress is to the Holy Bridegroom. She reckoned, however, without the immemorial demands of the heart and, under the aegis of Venus, she fell one night into the arms of her young man. They were discovered by the Jew with his dogs. Raising his jewelled hunting pistol, he shot, with perfect outraged propriety, the young tennis player. And the wife, when she saw her love dead, went calmly to a hill by their house and ate great quantities of the bitter aloes plants which her husband had informed her were poisonous. Bitter aloes is a violent cathartic. For years, afterwards, the wife imagined she could taste on her tongue that curious and potent essence.

This is the introduction to a three-part novella. Parts II and III will appear in subsequent issues.

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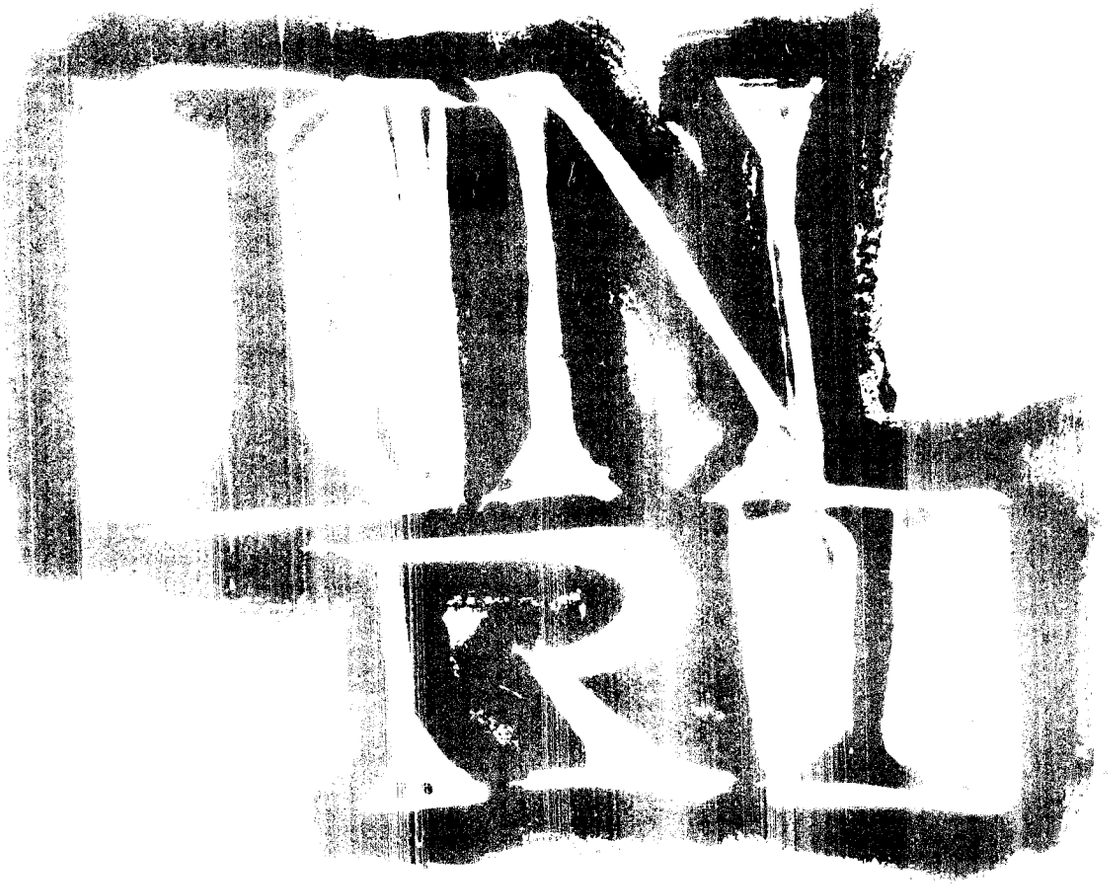

THE SEVEN SORROWS

A PORTFOLIO OF ART

by

Margaret Krebs

"The art of our time, sacred art included, will necessarily be characterized by a certain poverty, grimness and roughness which correspond to the violent realities of a cruel age."

Thomas Merton, in DISPUTED QUESTIONS

(Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy: New York, 1960)

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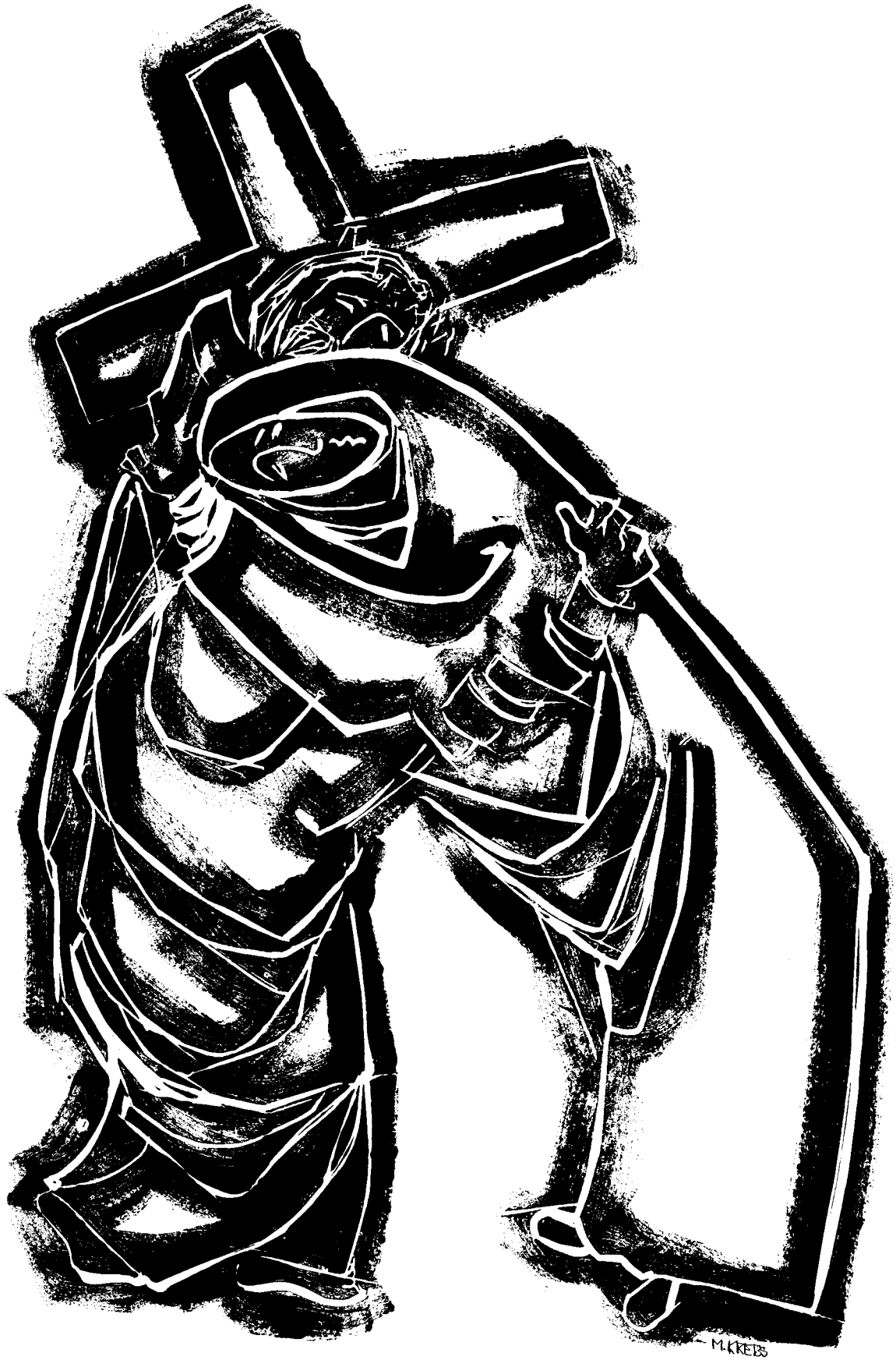

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MUSIC and the EDUCATED MAN

by Giovanni Camajani

"*Sine musica, nulla disciplina potest esse perfecta*"

WITHOUT MUSIC, no discipline can be perfect. These are the words of Isidore of Seville (560-636).

In an age of science it is difficult to espouse the arts, though the scientists are the best friends of art. They are not concerned with its mechanisms, but they can probe the spiritual depths of a work, whether it be for the eye, or meant for the ear. However, in an age which is practicing educational infanticide, in an age which is fearful of its future, pressed for a solution of its material problems, we will witness the salvation of its life and the loss of its soul.

With few notable exceptions most educators and administrators have clutched the wheels of a bandwagon screeching for the materialistic solids, the so-called "useful" subjects, the mandated practical courses prescribed by boards of education. That the bandwagon has turned into a juggernaut crushing the spirit of youth with its sterile facts and figures seems inconsequential even for a dubious apodal goal. "It would be nice to have a symphony orchestra, but we must have a cyclotron," said one university president. "We should stress the humanities," says another, "but we must build our curricula for business administration." You will hear such remarks on your university campus even while business men cry for graduates who can think, who have had a strong educational background in depth through the liberal arts, but who will choose the narrow specialist when employment decisions are made. As a consequence, your planning commissions, symphony boards of directors and art committees are full of business men who know nothing about the subject and frequently get in the way of any progressive ideas. Often they are full of socially ambitious women whose only claim to artistic fame is the artist's autograph and the dubious distinction of throwing a cocktail party for the artist who, too often wishes he were elsewhere.

We are concerned with humanities in general and music in particular. But what is music? What can it do for us? Music has an affinity with the human organism, with its tensions and releases, with its heartbeat. Too often in the popular mind, the usefulness of music is circumscribed by its entertainment value. Its material necessity is bound by its commercial acceptance. The laborer in the vineyard of serious music is classed as a highbrow. The intangibles of the subject are damned by an unsympathetic pragmatic middle-class mentality as a useless frill of a material existence. Bereft of understanding and incapable of evaluating on a spiritual plane, the only recourse of the popular mind is to ignore the subject, its structural logic, its beauty, its message, except as it titillates the senses for an entertaining moment. Blowing through some fancy plumbing we call a horn, or drawing some horsehair over sheep-gut and steel has been the educational end-all, while the music appreciation racket has relegated the position of both student and teacher to that of a collection of blithering idiots led by a disc-jockey.

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The educated man and music were tolerably close at one time, and until the rise of the middle class, it was considered a part of the social distinctions to keep abreast of the things of the spirit as well as of the flesh. Our mid-twentieth century professional educator begins his formal education with books of pictures in the elementary school, progresses on to secondary school where pictures are fewer, into college where they are restricted to cyclopedic tomes with no pictures at all. Having run the gamut of 16 to 18 years of education, he emerges out of this intellectual horn of plenty and reverts to type by reading *Life*, *Look*, and digests of the digests! Historically speaking one might dub this the cyclic method.

Plowing through this unfortunate contemporary educational miasma, the educated man will note a number of interesting ideas anent the origins of music. Herbert Spencer tells us that the roots of music lie in "impassioned speech." Such was truly the case with the Homeric bards who "chanted" their stories. Many people believe that the word of God—readings from the Bible—should be wafted on undulant tones, rendering homage to the Creator with song. Gregorian Chant is certainly a refinement of this idea. Italian recitative is another instance illustrating this theory of impassioned speech. So too is the German "sprechgesang"—a most appropriate name for speech-song.

Karl Stumpf in his "*Die Anfänge der Musik*" (Beginnings of Music) uses communication signals, bird songs and mating calls as a basis for his theory of origins. This is an utilitarian point of view which can be carried to absurd limits. Consider for a moment that, if mating calls are a basis for attraction—in that the mate with the best vocal chords, the most dulcet tones or the loudest voice gets the most attractive partner—then the theory of eugenics should apply to humans. Phylogenesis—the history of the race—dictates therefore, that in consequence of the milleniums that separate us from *pithecanthropus erectus*, we are a lovely set of creatures with magnificent musical properties. I am personally acquainted with too many instances where congratulations are not in order!

According to some musicologists, the beginnings of music are found in magic incantation. The Homeric Greeks made use of this incantation to stop the flow of blood in a wound. The American Indian has a musical formula to bring rain for the crops. The jungle of opinions is rendered even more dense by the philosophers themselves. Thus we have Schopenhauer who says that "Music expresses a truth superior to all material reality." Leibnitz tells us that "Music is an unconscious counting, or a felt relation of numbers, with music itself being integrated as a part of the vibrating universe." Plato has expressed himself quite definitely on the subject of music, especially on the effect of the arts known as music upon the individual and society. But Herbert Spencer has taken a Platonian theory of origins as stemming from constant motion, limiting it to the question of excess energy and impassioned speech. There is, too, the Darwinian theory of biological origins through evolution. Music is an acquisition of the male and female progenitors of the race of mankind, according to him, for the sake of charming the opposite sex.

The Darwinian theory of selection finds kinship in the Korzybski theory of the time-binding element of life which would have us climb on top of past generations—evolutionary wise—to give us the best possible brains today. In consequence we should have better music today than we had in the past, unless we come abreast of the pithy and devastating French logique: "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose." But this cumulative logic of eugenics must remain as it is, a fallacy of evolution.

As IF THIS WERE NOT ENOUGH, we have a Marxian theory of origins to contend with: music as an extension of and aid to labor, according to Karl Bücher of the London School of Economics. In his book "Arbeit und Rythmus" (Work and Rhythms) he traces the origins of music to work songs and chants of utility. Marxian dialectics have been applied, too, to the subject of poetry and its economic determinism through Christopher Caudwell in his book "Illusion and Reality." It is all a matter of opinion, based upon your premise which dictates your conclusion.

A theory of origins quite easily gravitates us to the origin of theories. Ancient man had some very

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remarkable theories regarding music. Very early it was found that music had great healing powers. Early Egyptian doctor-priests used a favorite incantation which was supposed to have a favorable influence on the fertility of women. I can imagine the consternation that would ensue if this were applicable today in an era of population explosions. The early Hebrews used music as a medicinal adjunct to mental and physical health. The most famous case is that of Saul. Confucius thought of music as a definite part of harmonious living. Man learned quite early that soft music has a relaxing and quite soothing effect, while lively music stimulates.

One of the most remarkable instances of music as a soothing agent is seen in 14th century Germany during the plague. At that time a form of communal hysteria seemed to grip central Europe. Great numbers of people would join hands, scream and shake for hours until they collapsed from exhaustion. It was infectious, and no medicine seemed to cure it. Finally the town fathers ordered soft, slow, relaxing music to be played in the streets as an antitoxin. It was the only cure that brought the people back to normal. Other instances of the therapeutic value of music concern the stories of Farinelli, the famous castrato, who eased the melancholy pains of Philip V of Spain. Similarly music was instrumental in curing George II of England as well as King Ludwig of Bavaria.

Music today is used as an adjunct to electroshock therapy, in anxiety states, in cases of involutional melancholy and acute grief. It is also indicated as a therapy in psychogenic disorders and quite often in conjunction with apathetic schizophrenics. Psychotherapy has been carried to a powerful and skillful art, but it cannot compare with the subtle powers of music which can awaken catatonic stupor where words fail completely. From the physiological angle, this is understandable when we realize that music affects the thalamus—that part of the brain which controls emotions. Where we find severe mental aberration or a regression from reality we know that the cortex—that portion of the brain which controls thought and speech—is blocked and a patient is incapable of responding rationally. Music through its sound waves, can stimulate the thalamus, which in turn activates the cortex, thereby restoring the patient to some semblance of normalcy. Of course this takes a considerable amount of skill on the part of the therapist, who must possess a wide and varied background, and who must choose his music carefully, giving consideration to age, sex, national and racial strains together with degrees of violence, depression or preoccupation shown by the patient. Music has become an added medicinal tool in the armamentarium of the modern physician.

There are other concepts in the field of music and its values which I would like to comment upon. Some years ago, a distinguished colleague of mine from the English department of a well known university intimated at a faculty meeting that Poetry is God and the English professor is His prophet. Using that statement as a point of approach I would remind you that music continues where words leave off. If poetry can transport one to a state of ecstacy through its pitch, intensity, tempos and rhythms—all of which are properties of music—then I would invite you to rise to a higher echelon of ecstacy through the realm of music.

Music and literature are alike when you consider that both are dependent upon the sense of hearing. They develop in time and require the exercise of the memorial faculties for their understanding. You can't make sense out of Hamlet, unless you remember Hamlet's conversation with his father's ghost. You can't unravel the structural logic of a symphony by Mozart or Beethoven unless your attention span and retentive listening powers retain the statement or theme, and connect it with what is transpiring each moment as the tonal fabric weaves itself past the ear. This symbiosis between tone and word ends here, however, for music is an art of and by itself. Literature—an art of word arrangement—achieves a meaning only with its arbitrarily attached external significance.

If we wish to avoid a mental anemia then we must consider that the education of the whole man must take art in general and music in particular into its intellectual orbit. We know that the

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beginnings of European drama has its roots in Greek tragedy. But Greek tragedy was essentially a religious activity whose handmaiden was the singing chorus and the stately dances that antedated the actors. We learn that Greek anthropormorphism was complemented by a poetic sense and a plasticity of imagination. We learn of the belief in one God as a Western contribution of the Hebrew which found its fulfillment for many people in Christianity. Complement this knowledge with a little understanding of the song of the Roman Church and you will understand better the Greek and Hebrew cultures.

How much more vivid is the unity of Medieval Christianity through its language, its iconography, when we expose the young student to the physical and spiritual unity of plainsong! What matter if we know that "Sumer is icumen in, ludly sing cucu" without realizing that as a canon—the strictest form in music—this charming ditty is a milestone in music history? What are we to say of the fabulous Renaissance? From the pictorial art we get a better idea of Isabella d'Este, Baldassare Castiglione, Lorenzo de Medici; of Botticelli who painted himself into his Adoration of the Magi; of Michelangelo who included his self portrait as the prophet Jeremiah on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel; or of Dante's features preserved by Giotto. How much more significant can all this be when we know something of the religious and secular polyphony of the Renaissance! There is a Palestrina and an Anerio, a Vittoria and a Morales, to mention but a few in the Mediterranean area.

What of the Elizabethan literature without some knowledge of the early English madrigal? Or of Shakespeare without music? Imagine! Or of Pepys's Diary without the chest of viols, or the charming amenities of the period which permitted host and guest to gather about the cleared dinner table to sing madrigals and glees from part books of that day?

We hit close to home of course, with the Baroque and Counter-Reformation when the Christian mysteries were celebrated in an eloquent union of architecture, painting and music *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*. How much more understandable are the *Meditations* of Descartes, the *Novum Organum* of Bacon, with some exposition of the works of Vivaldi, Buxtehude, Bach and Handel! Parallel John Donne and the subtle arguments he used in the Holy Sonnets—those Holy Sonnets immediately Protestant, though redolent of Jesuitical logic. Parallel this with the great Mass in B minor or the Magnificat of Johann Sebastian Bach, archpriest of North German Protestantism and a Lutheran chorale architecture superimposed upon a Catholic liturgical concept. A proper perspective of the whole Baroque Era is simply not possible without some knowledge of its music.

Consider the 18th century age of Reason and Enlightenment. Divorce Mozart from Pope or Haydn and his over one hundred symphonies from the chiaroscuro of Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, and you have a warped perspective of the classical period. The Romantic 19th century cannot properly be evaluated without the prodigious mountain of music from Beethoven to Brahms, or of the mystical Romantics whose spiritual traditions are soaked in the attitudes of the Middle Ages and the revival of the Gothic: Keats' *Eve of St. Agnes*, Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Carlyle, Ruskin and William Morris trying to stem the tide of industrialism by preaching a return to the golden past, and Debussy later returning to medieval polyphony for his musical palette of Impressionism.

The experimental epoch of the 20th century is another milestone of civilization which, despite its giant strides in science, will one day be evaluated in terms of man's spirit and his creative, artistic power.

LOOKING BACK, consider how much of this historical panorama is kept alive and green through the music we hear. True, our school years give us a brushing acquaintance with civilizations of the past, but from the Greeks of old, through the years to the present, the past is made to come alive via the tonal tapestries of the creative artist in music. Can we afford to cram facts and figures in formal education and forget that man does not live by bread alone?

Although the inclusion of music as an integral facet of the curriculum is justified from an historical sense, I would plead its cause from the

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standpoint of morality. A few moments ago I mentioned the education of the whole man. Music's tri-dimensional facets of rhythm, melody and harmony find a counterpart in the trinitarian aspects of head, hand and heart. We educate and develop the mind and the hands. Why neglect the spirit? The complete, whole, or—if you will—the holy concept of education must include these inseparable components of man which have to do with societal amelioration and usefulness. Omitting the spirit, we omit the organic catalyst and central ganglion which unifies this educational trinity.

Music can be and is a moral force. This is not to imply that if you play, dance or sing, you are *ipso facto* in tune with humanity's *summum bonum*. That you attend the opera and symphony does not automatically elevate you to the morally and spiritually elect. Such views are positively harmful, for it imposes upon music a task it cannot perform of and by itself. Morality is merely sociality, speaking non-philosophically. The good moral person is the socially well-integrated individual who has learned the art of achieving personal satisfactions within the confines of his milieu. Hence he is happy and happiness is synonymous with goodness. Hence happiness within one's own sphere spells social amelioration, and social betterment is the main objective of moral education.

But what kinship is there between music and morality? How do they complement each other? The sciences are said to imbue us with a sense of truth, mental clarity and tolerance. The study of history and anthropology is thought to instill us with a sense of fraternity and communal oneness. But the educated man will not believe a word of this. There is nothing in science, history or anthropology that will teach us anything but science, history or anthropology. It is only when we expose the humanity, the human worth inherent in these subjects that we perceive the ethical-moral suasive powers. No part of the *fundus instructus* has any magical properties which makes it ethically good or wields any influence for good, except in ratio to its assessment in human terms.

The evaluation of music of and by itself reveals that it too, has not the power to change social behavior. Like any cultural endeavor, it is apathetic, incapable of doing anything except existing for itself alone. It is only when it impinges itself upon our consciousness that it can elicit a response for better or for worse. It is only when we consider our response to it that we begin to see the tremendous force that music can be for social betterment. That response depends upon your own background and auditory experience.

Music, through its contact with the beautiful, through its exercise of the beautiful, can become a source for social good, through creative and re-creative self-expression, leading to emotional fulfillment and personal achievement. Music offers a broad kind of emotional and intellectual experience, so rich that when properly administered it induces attitudes of creative self-betterment transferable to other departments of living. If we consider that moral goodness imposes the responsibility of literacy and mental competency for each individual commensurate with his intellectual capacity, utilizing the full capabilities of head and hand, then we certainly cannot omit the development of the spirit as part of this trinity of instruction for the educated man. Facts and figures, plus manipulative skills eventually must be thrown into the spiritual hopper to be cultured and refined for the use of the enlightened man. If we consider the arts of communication through verbalistics as one important aspect of intellectual power, we cannot afford to overlook the communicative power of the spirit through music. It becomes then the duty of the educational machinery to make use of this force for its own good.

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THE MORNING SONG OF LORD ZERO

CONRAD Aiken

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Gambler and spendthrift by nature
chameleon whose name is Zero
nameless in headlines
anonymous in breadlines
I am your hero.
Perhaps today a millionaire from Mozambique
sans Latin and sans Greek
trés debonair trés chic
but inscrutably someone else tomorrow
when suddenly I speak
all languages at will:
the cashier's till
spills me a tinplate word
the golden shill
shimmers me another
I am your jack-and-jill-
of-all-trades, dubious brother
panhandler father Cassandra mother
and yet in the end insidiously
O and indispensably
something more.
See me sneak from door to door
tongue in cheek
ready with adaptable speech
to knock on each,
listen to the sales-talk, "love" or "honor,"
"courage, cowardice, virtue, vice,
belief or disbelief"!
Down the unending street
where man, your image, extends himself forever,
I, your Greek-gift-bearing-donor,
I, but believe me! your Cassandra,
knock and knock
(do not call me *vox et præterea nihil!*)
and if no answer stoop and try the lock
but hoping still to find
somewhere some day
the sacred key
to you or me.

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Azrael, pass thou not by this way,
shade not today the innocent tree.

I am he
and this I share with you
in this perhaps alone am true
who cannot infringe upon, cannot conceive
the arcane process by which he might believe
or not believe or learn or know
begin or not begin choose or not choose: who came
without a name
as also without intention, knows no measure
save only that with which the umbilical cord
provided him *tout court* of pain or pleasure:
rising not with the sun
but the day well begun
to brush his teeth and defæcate and eat
innocently sans knowledge of their meanings
or of his own
and thus goes forth to face the preposterous unknown.
Are we of one substance? Are we flesh or stone?
Can you remember what I remember?
Yet brought by solar synthesis together
comedians of the soul's capricious weather
obedient to who-knows-what we seek to chart
shallow disturbances of the heart
goblin manifestations of All Souls' November
the spiked and golden monstrances of May.
I your hero take apart
in golden leaves
the mysteries of the infinite platitude
figure degrees of magnitude
in man's imagination
of which the application remains obscure
pick up with tweezers some idiot surd of meaning
thereby summoning the morning stars to shout and stamp together
and so with gradual decimals construct
the glass-topped hearse
that is our universe.

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Belly to belly and skin to skin
O lift the latch and walk right in
will you have me now or will you hesitate?
We played pinochle and stayed out late
had midnight supper at the Golden Gate
then read the morning papers.
We know what the well-primed critics say
of Mister Shakespeare's latest play
tragedy or farce or melodrama
witness the o-so-sad strip-tease
of Lesbian lads and Panic lasses
forgotten as soon as seen.
We'll take the express to Bowling Green
and watch the rosy-fingered dawn
once more at her matutinal flattery
above the Battery
then tip out one by one the fading lights
and turn to a golden crab the Staten Island ferry.
Brief is our measure. Let us be merry.

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Look, love, the miracle is with us, it is the body,
the holy dwelling, the acceptable machine,
our own divine composing-room
provided for us from the womb
alive and with its own precipitate and unpredictable aliveness
prismatic vision of the universe no less
so brilliant that unless we blink
or do not stop to think
eyes and mind
are both struck blind.
How in this Whole Magnificence to find
our own self-seeking and self-shaping phrase
and so ordain our days?
Lord how the streets now shine
as the Great Opiate's eastern conduits run with wine
and pour into the sea. Dull would we be
if we withheld the attribute divine
from brick and stone and flesh and blood
and from this awakening and self-breathing tree
our tree of heaven
spellbound in its epiphany
as the proud clocks strike seven.

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Smith is early today and Jones is late
the box-trees by the Funeral Home have been watered
the newspaper truck throbs by the news-stand at the corner
the Shamrock Grill is open turnstiles are clacking
the cobbler is in the window of Shoes Rebuilt
peers down at the heel he is tacking
the green light says Walk the red light says Stop
take me quick to the apothecary shop
we dial Meridian for the split jewel of time
and Weather for the windsong of weather.
Who needs a change of scene
walks with the green
into the unfolding world
himself too unfolding
the stage is struck the lights change
the street grows strange
it leads without hesitation forever
into our own involuntary invention
among the rainbows and love-whispers
of the unexpected
the fateful fairyland
that waits to be named
between life and death.

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Azrael Azrael
winged with thunder
pass thou not by this way this day
let no thing die
the farmer sun is hastening
the western hill is glistening
the eastern honeycombs are filled
with crocus light
it is farewell to night
see that this day no thing be killed.

But if thy daily dead
old thunder head
thou yet must take, then catch instead
the bee's faint shadow on the hill
but the bee spare and daffodil
leave all else living still
—under the opening eyelids of the sky
pass thou not hawklike by.

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The landscape why is it not as we had foreseen it
there are hills before us but no mountains
and a river winding behind the hills
and see on the hills the blessed creatures
lions composed and unrampant beneath a flight of birds
in a ladder of light
and there in one corner a last pocket of night
ravelling away to the sun.
The waterfalls are not exactly those of the mind
dropping their blue against the green
it is all familiar but also unfamiliar
known and unknown true and untrue
benign but also perilous
and as we step into the meadow
we feel the shadow that is not precisely a shadow
the breath that is not precisely a breath. Death
surely has not preceded our footsteps here
surely does not follow us? The landscape
opens unhesitatingly before us
hills from rivers roll back
pathways open to left and right
our feet are now in the morning brook
and its clear parable of time
the tree is under our hands and over our heads
and as we move to what we do not know
and can never rightly imagine
all these become the ambiguous language
by which we come to pass
and learn to see
and mean
and be.

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A SYMPOSIUM
ON
J. D. SALINGER

I

J. D. SALINGER'S GLASS MENAGERIE

by Warren Hinckle

II

THE SALINGER SYNDROME: Charity Against Whom?

by Robert O. Bowen

III

SALINGER: The Murky Mirror

by Edward M. Keating

On the following pages, three readers of one of America's most widely discussed authors present their personal responses to the works of J. D. Salinger. While all the editors do not necessarily agree with the comments expressed in these essays, they yet feel that these expressions of strong and divergent personal opinion deserve the attention of our readers.

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I

J. D. SALINGER'S GLASS MENAGERIE

by Warren Hinckle

WARREN HINCKLE *is a graduate of the University of San Francisco, where he was Editor of the award-winning college newspaper,* The San Francisco Foghorn, *and the editor of a symposium-booklet on Catholic education,* The Great Debate.

UNTIL THE LUCE PUBLICATIONS poked their way into the private life of J. D. Salinger last fall, the firmly entrenched batteries of his fans—and detractors—had little idea of what the secretive Mr. Salinger looked like, let alone what he ate for breakfast. These curiosities were cleared up in a grand journalistic overkill when a *Time* cover story and a *Life* candid portrait appeared within the same month; but what Salinger has to say—rather, what he *means* by what his characters say—remains an object of some controversy.

Salinger certainly isn't telling. The veil of flippancy with which he delights in surrounding himself ("I was with the Fourth Division during the war. I almost always write about very young people." is his autobiographical summary) serves to compound the confusion of the multitude of critics attempting to probe the tortured, often mystical, cadence of his fiction.

He has been called everything from a saint to a scatologist; *The Catcher in the Rye* has been compared with equal sincerity to both *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tropic of Cancer*. Whatever the complaints of his detractors, few would dispute that J. D. Salinger provided the great critical game of the fifties. With but one novel and two sparse books of short stories, he provoked a wave of essays that has yet to begin to crest. Just about everybody got into the act: Arthur Mizener calls Salinger a "poet of the common language"; Maxwell Geismar says he expresses the "Ivy League Rebellion of the Fifties"; Alfred Kazin thinks Salinger exemplifies the "lean reserves" of the American writer reduced to the "mystery of personality" for subject matter; Leslie Fiedler, who sees a pervert under almost every fly leaf, has lumped *The Catcher in the Rye* in his list of homosexually-oriented novels.

So extreme is the diversity of opinion among the critics as to what Salinger is saying that one is led to ask, as Descartes asked of the quibblings of the Scholastics, is there not a way we can discover with some degree of certainty what Salinger is about?

I would suggest that there is a consistent strain of anguish running through Salinger's fiction, from his early work for *Collier's* to the latest story in the *New Yorker*, that can be traced to an understanding of the development of Salinger's thought, if not a near-to-accurate conception of what, through his so-called "poetry of the vernacular," he is trying to achieve.

The Great Salinger Vogue began in 1951. The Book-of-The-Month-Club selected his thin novel of Holden Caulfield's misadventures for its monthly offering to the literary masses, and Salinger has been in national orbit ever since. *Franny and Zooey*, his two stories published in book form in mid-1961, led the best-seller lists and is still gobbled up by hungry Salinger fans who have to survive on a meager diet—Salinger's last story was published in January of 1959. (They will be thrown some sort of a bone this fall, however. An enterprising publisher has unearthed *Way of the Pilgrim*, the "small pea green cloth back book" that sends Franny Glass off on her spiritual crisis, and will publish it in November with an eye to the Salinger faithful.)

Salinger, after doodling around in the early 40's with a group of sporadic and unimpressive short stories, first initiated a serious thematic discussion in a series centering around G. I. Babe Gladwaller which appeared between 1943 and 1945 in *Collier's* and *The Saturday Evening Post*. After 1945, Salinger published almost exclusively in the *New Yorker*. Some of these stories, beginning with the introduction of Holden Caulfield in *I'm Crazy* (1945), were spliced into *The Catcher in the Rye* in 1951 and others were published as the collection of *Nine Stories* in 1953. Salinger's epic series on the Glass family, a kind of One Man's Family

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version of Yoknapatawpha County, has occupied him solely since 1955.

It is in the stories set at the close of the Second World War about Babe Gladwaller that the reader begins to get the persistent hint—like the faint beep-beep of a globe-circling rocket—that something's wrong, somewhere. The stories end with Gladwaller's uncomfortable return to this country from his tour of occupation in France. He goes to visit his newly-dead best friend's newly-married girl, and tries to tell her about the deadly mortar that didn't whistle. He is awkward and embarrassed, a constant condition of Salinger's tortured troops. "I'm sorry I have to be a stranger with hay fever and on my way to lunch and a matinee. It seems lousy. Everything seems lousy. I didn't think it would be any good, but I came anyway. I don't know what's wrong with me since I came back."

Salinger seems to be feeling his way in these early works, as though a thought not clear enough in his own mind to be plainly stated is dominating the creative process. An impending sense of the estrangement of the truly sensitive man from his fellows slowly evolves as Gladwaller develops a high degree of perception that puts him out of step with the others and maroons him on an island of acute insight into the unfeeling and unloving world swirling about him. This perceptive maroonment of the individual—the predicament of all Salinger heroes—is explained at this time by the problems of post-war adjustment: those who have not shared Babe Gladwaller's experiences are not *simpatico*.

THIS SENSE OF ESTRANGEMENT and anguish persists and grows stronger in Salinger as he launches a new period of stories with the shift in focus from Gladwaller to Holden Caulfield. The transition is eased through the medium of Vincent Caulfield who figures prominently in the war stories as Gladwaller's best friend. The phenomenon of estrangement is now viewed on a more intense personal plane than common *ante bellum* problems, and the stories of this period exhibit a memorable panorama of frustrated human relationships. All Salinger's characters have a need for love, but are denied the possibility of achieving it by an uncompromising and insensitive world. All are blessed with a peculiar insight and cursed with an extreme sensitivity. Holden Caulfield tells us at the end of his chaotic chronicle that "I sort of *miss* everybody I told about," Stradlater with his hairy razor, Ackley and his pimples, even Maurice, the pimp who beat him up. Beneath all Holden's tough talk, there is a solid substratum of sympathy for all his fellow men without which it would be impossible for Salinger to realize a character. The young genius in *Teddy* goes dutifully to his death realizing resignedly that his parents "love their reasons for loving us almost as much as they love us, and most of the time more." Sergeant X in *For Esmé—With Love and Squalor* finds that a spinster Nazi woman whom he arrested had written "in a small, hopelessly sincere handwriting" in a book by Goebbels: "Dear God, life is hell." Under this he writes the quotation from Dostoevski: "Fathers and teachers, I ponder 'What is hell?' I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love." Seymour Glass, shortly before his suicide in *A Perfect Day for Bananafish*, is overcome by the pure beauty of a small girl. She is on a float in the ocean, and he picks up one of her wet feet and kisses the arch. This is a typical example of love in Salinger's terms: the binding compassion of the simple, non-physical love among all people that is neglected, or at least rarely depicted, except in his fiction.

BECAUSE OF THEIR UNIQUE QUALITIES of perception, the Salinger character feels a sense of responsibility to others. Holden, in a non-candid moment, tells his little sister Phoebe what he really wants to be:

> I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody's around —nobody big, I mean—except me. And I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff—I mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and *catch* them. That's all I'd do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy,

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but that's the only thing I'd really like to be. I know it's crazy.

The idea that the person estranged from his fellows *possesses* something setting him apart—rather than lacking some Freudian quality of adjustment—is central to Salinger, and is developed as a key theme in his series on the Glass family.

Though Seymour Glass killed himself in 1948, the delineation of the Glass family does not begin in earnest until 1955, when *Franny* was published in the *New Yorker*. The same year Salinger published *Raise High The Roof Beam, Carpenters*, about Seymour's wedding day. *Zooey* was published in 1957, followed in 1959 by *Seymour: An Introduction*, a long, agonizing prose poem in which Buddy Glass attempts to recreate his deceased brother.

The main character in the Glass family, "part Jewish, part Irish, and conceivably part-Minotaur extraction," is Seymour Glass, a "ringding enlightened man, a God-knower" as his brother and alter-ego Buddy describes him. Buddy is a "part time English Department member at a girl's school in upper New York" who lives alone "but *catless*"; the eldest surviving brother, Waker, "an ex-roving Carthusian monk-reporter, now impounded" is a Jesuit priest; Waker's twin brother, Walt, was killed in a freak accident in Japan during the Occupation; Zooey, at 29, resembles "the blue-eyed Jewish-Irish Mohican scout who died in your arms at the roulette table at Monte Carlo," and is a successful television leading man. There are two girls: Boo Boo is a "bouncy, solvent Westchester matron," the mother of three children; Franny, 25, also a budding actress, is the youngster of the family—she is in her last year of college when she undergoes the spiritual crisis that occupies *Zooey* and *Franny*. Their parents, Les and Bessie Glass, starred as a team on the international vaudeville circuit, now live in a comfortable fifth-floor apartment in Manhattan. All seven children, at one time or another, were featured panelists on the national radio quiz show, "It's a Wise Child."

IF SALINGER CONTINUES with his present program, the Glasses will be one of the most realistically conceived and extensively chronicled clans in American fiction, sort of mystical Forsytes. In a rare burst of editorial confidence, Salinger says of the Glass works: "It is a long-term project, patently an ambitious one . . . I've been waiting for them (the Glasses) most of my life, and I think I have fairly decent, monomaniacal plans to finish them with due care and all-available skill." To date, we have extensive information on only four Glasses: Seymour, Buddy, Franny and Zooey. Two other children have appeared in a circumspect manner in earlier stories: Boo Boo is the mother of Lionel Tannenbaum, the child who thinks a "kike" is a kite in *Down at the Dinghy;* and Walt Glass figures briefly as the late and lamented lover of Eloise in *Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut.*

The familiar strain of anguish parading through Salinger's work assumes a march tempo in the Glass menagerie as the tight dramatic construction of earlier stories gives way to the long, feverish monologues of *Zooey* and *Seymour*. The Glasses are well aware of their peculiar qualities: "We're the Tattooed Lady, and we're never going to have a minute's peace, the rest of our lives, till everybody else is tattooed, too," Zooey tells Franny.

SALINGER'S STUDY OF ESTRANGEMENT, in this latest period, is complicated with an overly generous sprinkling of Eastern philosophy. But he stipulates, in *Seymour*, that he is not being *doctrinaire* or looking to Brahma for an easy way out. "I am neither a Zen archer nor a Zen Buddhist, much less a Zen adept," Buddy Glass indignantly declares.

It is clear now, however, that the estranged person experiences a mystical peak under the tough epidermis of the world and comes to a startling understanding of the universe and of God. This insight is inexplicable in terms of common human understanding, and thus Salinger's people become mystical martyrs, the "saint-seers" with whom the bloated, unperceptive world is at odds. Their unusual depth and sensitivity seem to preclude their becoming a part of the daily, ordinary-dimensional world, and this failure can be tragic, as in Seymour's suicide after his frustrating marriage to Muriel Fedder with her "undis-

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criminating heart."

Buddy, attempting to explain his brother's death wish, says that "many great artists have had something wrong with them as persons in history . . ." and that today suicide is "high on the list of compelling infirmities for creative men." He states the substance of Seymour's tragedy:

> I say that the true artist-seer, the heavenly fool who can and does produce beauty, is mainly dazzled to death by his own scruples, the blinding shapes and colors of his own sacred conscience.

CHESTERTON HAS SAID that great men often appear in history as great buffoons, especially at times when "corruption and chaos are disturbing ordinary minds." Against the garish *tableaux* of a frenetic and unloving society, Seymour Glass has that "rather terrible hallmark" common to most persons who "look for God with apparent enormous success—he very frequently behaves like a fool, even an imbecile."

In all Salinger stories there is a constant disjunction between the intensely sensitive and the ludicrous, the mystical and the silly. The function of the often arbitrary comic element in Salinger's fiction is to underscore this thin gray line. Seymour goes out of his way to insult a matron with zinc oxide on her nose just before he shoots himself. Buddy arrives to greet Seymour's widow with a grin on his face because, after crying for five hours on the plane, he hears a woman behind him saying ". . . and the *next morning*, mind you, they took a pint of pus out of that lovely young body of hers."

For every "good poet dying," Buddy says, there will always be somebody down the road "having a hilarious pint of pus taken from her lovely young body." It is this mystical relationship of all things—beautiful, and ludicrous, and beautifully ludicrous—that is the key to Franny's rejuvenation. Franny, sick of "ego, ego, ego," has gone into a mystical frump and is feverishly mouthing the Jesus Prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me") so that the act will become part of her and she can 'pray without ceasing.' But Zooey pulls her out of her spiritual nose-dive by explaining the anonymous Fat Lady for whom Seymour asked them to shine their shoes and be funny when they were on "It's a Wise Child.":

> I had her sitting on this porch all day, swatting flies, with her radio going full-blast from morning till night. I figured the heat was terrible, and she probably had cancer, and—I don't know. Anyway, it seemed goddam clear why Seymour wanted me to shine my shoes when I went on the air. It made *sense*.

Seymour's concern for the Fat Lady embodies his mystical insight into the world where every act is a religious act, sustained by the wonderful compassion of a general love among all men.

"There isn't anyone *any*where that isn't Seymour's Fat Lady," Zooey tells Franny. "Don't you know that? Don't you know that goddam secret yet? . . . *don't you know who that Fat Lady really is?* . . . Ah, buddy. Ah, buddy. It's Christ himself. Christ himself, buddy."

AS THE CATCHER IN THE RYE was an extension of earlier short stories, Salinger's current *New Yorker* series is best regarded as work-in-progress. He still has much to accomplish with the versatile Glass family. We have followed Salinger through the discovery, definition and analysis of the phenomenon of estrangement. The next step lies in the "great deal of thoroughly unscheduled material" he is "fussing with," and with the future intricate workings of the Glasses.

Salinger is difficult to hang on any convenient critical peg because of his amorphous subject matter. Those critics who have attempted to pin a label on him will have difficulty making it stick because of the yet incomplete nature of his most important work; some of the absurd opinions delivered on him seem more symptomatic of a literary psychosis than a measured critical judgment.

Salinger has, at this point in his career, at least begun to pick apart the callouses of our emotionally suberized society. André Gide says the true artist bears a wound made by contact with reality which "must never be allowed to heal . . . which must always remain painful and bleeding."

As long as J. D. Salinger continues with his Glass menagerie, that fine wound will remain open for all the world to see.

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II

THE SALINGER SYNDROME: Charity Against Whom?

by Robert O. Bowen

ROBERT O. BOWEN, *novelist and critic, is best known for his World War II novel,* The Weight of the Cross. *Although a regular reviewer for* The National Review, *his fiction has appeared in official USSR journals. He is an Associate Editor of* RAMPARTS, *and is currently teaching at the University of Dallas.*

WHEN A WELL-TO-DO COLLEGE STUDENT WAS gathered in recently for bank robbery, he confessed to understanding himself better for the experience, and several journalists praised his humble candor. J. D. Salinger's characters demonstrate the same caustic humility which slashes as sentimentalists those who attempt virtue while relieving the slob of any onus of failure: no strain, no pain, as the saying runs.

Cast in a jargon promulgated from the shoddier prep schools of the East, the Salinger philosophy parallels the sick-sick line transmitted by Mort Sahl and related cosmopolitan think people. A sneer at a physical defect here, a cutting remark at an ideal there, and the audience falls into line rather than risk a turn at the whipping post. From the first wild ballyhoo at the publication of *The Catcher in the Rye* to Salinger's canonization through the presentation of his peaked visage on a *Time* magazine cover, his work has been relentlessly pushed by social science teachers, editors, and "Garment District" critics of the Lionel Trilling cut. Salinger, they staunchly agree, holds the mirror up to a degenerate American culture.

Almost all of Salinger can be found in one *New Yorker* magazine story, "A Perfect Day for Bananafish": the superficial action, the social-notes-from-all-over diction, and the basic lack of profound inquiry. As for the people, not merely the hero or his wife lack purpose; rather the world of the story offers no hope, no aiming point, not even a direction. The story provides a nostalgia for childhood as a defense against the insights of maturity as though the adult world were by nature evil and miserable. The authorities appealed to are ineffectual at best: the psychiatrist is a lush; the parents are fools; the army is cruel; the marriage bond is a lousy drag. In agreement with Salinger's other fiction, the dramatic statement is that true maturation lies in perceiving life as corrupt.

Sick or not, Salinger's fiction attracts many young people, a symptom which ought not be blinked. He militates against traditional strictures, and because they are rebellious, many youths develop a Salinger syndrome temporarily. Perhaps Salinger's strongest appeal—being that usually aped by students—is his aggressiveness against language taboos. Unlike Henry Miller, Salinger rarely violates the statute, but his tone and diction violate good taste as the following *Catcher in the Rye* samples indicate. "Poker up his ass," "she had very big knockers," "giving her a feel under the table," "flitty-looking Tattersall vests." Such gaucheries amuse as "twenty-three skiddoo" or "Oh you kid!" once did, but with the difference that the Salinger fan repeats them in mockery, often boasting that he is tearing down established standards. Grandfather's gaucheries differed in kind since they aimed at elevating the boy rather than reducing the surroundings.

Frequently Salinger appeals as a peepshow into forbidden areas. Holden Caulfield's wanderings in *Catcher in the Rye* include a hotel room sortie with a prostitute, a homosexual reconnaissance, casual descriptions and/or reference to perverse conduct. A significant appeal to an immature reader lies in both the subject matter and in the Freudian word games required in a search for Holden's motives.

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ANOTHER SALINGER DEVICE for the reduction of constructive values is the misdirection of positive values in reader sympathy. Generally the evil which he openly attacks in a character is minor or absent, but the attack destroys the victim regardless, and with the victim goes some respect for his calling. Holden turns aside his old history teacher as a phony. The teacher has tried to help Holden, and, of course, Holden wished to justify his own worthlessness by implying that no one had offered assistance. So the teacher is negated as a phony, the grounds being his reference to Holden's parents as "grand people." The criterion for spotting phonies in the book is necessarily vague since no one, including the narrator, is presented as un-phony. The mechanism allows the reader to remain on the approved side only if he is not phony enough to be taken in by parents, teachers, and others who make constructive or pleasant remarks.

A large area of Salinger's appeal lies in the misconstrued pity his misery sharers draw. In "Just Before The War With The Eskimos" the heroine suddenly sympathizes with her snob schoolmate on learning that the snob's brother is an advanced slob and an invalid, that the only outsider in the house is a homosexual, and that the schoolmate herself is easily manipulated. Her aim is certainly to create an infantile subjective superiority. Again, the insight is that in the *real* world, inside the home, with the facade stripped and the brother picking his nose in his dirty pajamas—in this climate of truth we are all slobs. The viewpoint character's condescension is hardly Christian charity since she considers no help, no direction away from the present mess.

WHERE CONDESCENSION SERVES FOR PITY, the Salinger wit offers savagery as insight, coercing the reader into an attitude out of fear of being stuffy or what is worse, altruistic, reverent, nice. *Catcher in the Rye* subdues a reader summarily in the passages on "old Jesus," who was a "poor bastard," and the Disciples, who "annoy the hell out of" Holden because they did not help "old Jesus." If the reader sympathizes with the passage, the tone disallows him reverence. If he balks at the tone, he is as phony as the Disciples. Should he call off-side against the Christians, no doubt he will be tagged an enemy of free speech.

Should a passage deviate to the serious, the tone bogs down at the material level rather than ponder any spiritual truth. In the short story "De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period" the narrator, that precocious Salinger young man, experiences a revelation while watching a girl lace a hernia truss on a dummy in a shop window. "The thought was forced on me that no matter how coolly or sensibly or gracefully I might one day learn to live my life, I would always at best be a visitor in a garden of enamel urinals and bedpans, with a sightless, wooden dummy-deity standing by in a marked-down rupture truss."

SALINGER EVIDENCES CONSIDERABLE SKILL in reducing the vision of an ideal through pejorative or disgusting details. The page numbers parenthesized after the following citations from the Signet edition demonstrate the regularity in *Catcher in the Rye* of such rhetoric. This is not merely a smart alecky kid's tone; the areas of attack indicate the grand design of the book in paralleling similar areas cited earlier and demonstrable throughout Salinger.

On Christianity: "I said I wasn't blaming Jesus or anything. It wasn't His fault that He didn't have any time" (p. 91). *On American Folk Heroes:* "They were always showing Columbus discovering America, having one helluva time getting old Ferdinand and Isabella to lend him the dough to buy ships with, and then the sailors mutinying on him and all. Nobody gave too much of a damn about old Columbus, but you always had a lot of candy and . . ." (p. 110). *On Christianity:* "I said old Jesus probably would've puked if He could see it" (p. 125). ". . . it's only his body and all that's in the cemetery, and his soul's in Heaven and all that crap" (p. 141). *On American History:* " 'A Christmas Pageant For Americans.' It stinks, but I'm Benedict Arnold. I have practically the biggest part" (p. 146). *On Educational Institutions:* "They have this day, Veterans' Day, that all the jerks that graduated from Pencey around 1776 come back and walk all over the place, with their wives and grandchildren and everybody . . . One old guy . . .

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wanted to see if his initials were still in one of the can doors . . . All you have to do to depress somebody is give them a lot of phony advice while you're looking for your initials in some can door" (p. 152).

The steady attrition of blasphemy alone in *Catcher in the Rye* conditions the reader to a blasphemous view of the world. Throughout all of his work Salinger's first person narrators punctuate with *Christ sake*, *Chrissake*, *Christ*, *Jesus*, *God damn it*, *goddam*, *I swear to God*, and varieties thereof. No one denies the practice of blasphemy among ill-bred people, but that observation does not explain how a reader can wallow in so much blasphemy and remain reverent toward either the Holy Name or anything else.

THE MOST NEGLECTED single factor in all of the current Salinger criticism is his anti-Catholicism. This critic does not know a single citation on the subject. Catholics have warped their vision safely around such controversies as the Mexican Suppression of the Clergy in the 1920's and the Christian nature of the Hungarian Rebellion of the 1950's against Communism, and it is not to be expected that they would shed their ghetto mentality for domestic anti-Catholic propaganda. The Salinger attack has been overlooked sufficiently that the Catholic magazine *America* recently joined with *Time* and the *Partisan Review* in praising his literary virtues.

The Catcher in the Rye is the most directly anti-Catholic of Salinger's works. On page 102 of the Signet edition his hero says "Catholics are always trying to find out if you're a Catholic." The comment concerns one Ackley, a most unsavory young beast, and a Catholic. The bias is readily enough noted if we stand the remark against the same sentence with a different noun: "Jews are always trying to find out if you're a Jew." Similar lines have drawn heavy fire from the Anti-Defamation League and other Jewish pressure groups. Surely, open-minded readers will acknowledge the propriety of measuring anti-Catholicism by the same scale. One page beyond the citation above, the speaker condescends to say: "I'm not saying I *blame* Catholics [for finding out whether others are Catholic]. I don't. I'd be the same way, probably, if I was a Catholic." Seventeen pages beyond, the canard is repeated: "The Catholics stick together." The remarks are significant because neither Catholicism nor Catholics have any bearing on the narrative.

A more insidious negativism lies in Ackley's being a Catholic. Aside from his disgusting personal habits, his Catholic defense of the Church in arguments is this: "I don't care what you say about *me* or anything, but if you start making cracks about my goddam religion, for Chrissake——" Now, the New York City school system purged Dickens' *David Copperfield* because Fagan low-rated Jews, and purged Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* because the phrase "Nigger Jim" offended Negroes. What with such militant measures, New Yorkers well know that when only one of a kind occurs, the one is an editorial judgment on the kind.

Farther along in *Catcher in the Rye* Salinger likens two nuns to Salvation Army beggars around Times Square. The nuns are not very bright, and they pass quickly with many condescending remarks. Apparently the passage proves Salinger's objectivity toward Catholics: he is kind to nuns! However, in his bourgeois tone to liken them to Salvation Army beggars around Times Square makes them seem stupid in the light of the fact that nothing altruistic is worth attempting in such a phony world as his.

The implied slur for the Salvation Army in Salinger's use of it as the ultimate in his condescension formula speaks for itself. Interestingly such slurs are always toward minorities without effective falange defense. Thus when a Negro maid appears, as in "Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut," she is good and even slightly abused, and she had better be, for the NAACP represents her. On the other hand, the Japanese couple in "De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period" are of that stupidly subhuman image found in the early *Mr. Moto* movies, but as with the Catholic Ackley, this couple has no action group to defend it in novels.

By contrast in "Down At The Dinghy" we find a little boy crying over something that a gentile—fortunately not a Negro—maid said

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about his father.

"Sandra—told Mrs. Snell—that Daddy's a big—sloppy—kike."

Just perceptibly, Boo Boo flinched . . .

The reader flinches too, but who flinched at the familiar contempt for The Holy Name throughout Salinger? The point is offered that Salinger hardly deserves Christian praise for an essentially anti-Christian writing simply because that writing is pro-Jewish and pro-Negro and so on.

Probably Salinger is not basically any more anti-Christian than he is basically antagonistic to any undefended group, say hydrocephalics or basket cases. Still, in *Catcher in the Rye* as otherwhere, his victims regularly belong to unmilitant minorities or disorganized social elements. The headmaster's daughter bites her nails to the quick; the old history teacher is a nose-picker; Ackley, the Catholic, picks pimples on other people's beds; Stradlater, the handsome Ivy League type, uses a filthy razor; and on through the nauseous world.

Usually instead of being ethnically partisan, Salinger holds to bourgeois manners as taught in prep schools. He trails a victim until he catches him picking his nose; then he hollers "Shame!" and lights out after the next victim. Nose-picking falls under manners rather than the more profound value judgments of philosophy; and the foibles of Salinger's characters are specified by the advertisers of the magazines which publish his fiction: halitosis, dermatitis, and similar cosmetic derelictions. Ironically Salinger has borrowed a value system, superficial as it is, from the merchandising field of consumer consumption goods his un-heroes so passionately despise.

A CAUTIOUS READER may ask whether Salinger is being accused of the snobberies his characters demonstrate but which he intended with fully conscious irony as snobberies. If the stories and the one thin novel offered alternatives, this might be the case. If Holden, for instance, said that cheap luggage was a contemptible thing, and then Salinger paraded an admirable person with cheap luggage, the irony would be evident. In *Catcher in the Rye*, Ackley has cheap luggage. Another bad guy has cheap luggage. The nuns have cheap luggage. In each case the persons involved are inferior, and their inferiority is reported partly in terms of luggage. Furthermore, luggage snobbery carries over into other stories, into "De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period" and "Teddy" for example.

No critic has yet pointed out the heavy vein of caste snobbery in Salinger. In *Catcher in the Rye* the three working girls from Seattle are sneered at because they lack Powers Model or Vassar poise. Here indeed is a turnabout since O. Henry's Mazie was pitied for her naïveté, while her cosmopolitan tormentor was despised for his cynicism. Salinger's elevator operator is looked down on as old and a failure, and two cab drivers react to Holden's importunities in exactly the same stupidly unsympathetic fashion. The sum of this is that cab drivers are surly and stupid people and office girls from Seattle are gawking and contemptible natives. Teachers, if not old nose-pickers in shoddy bathrobes, are homosexuals as with Mr. Antolini. All in all, the Salinger tone echoes with remarkable precision the essential meanness of the notorious 19th century English expression: "The natives begin at Calais."

A professional underdogism often incongruously accompanies Salinger's snobberies while being itself a relatively obvious hypocrisy. Throughout *Catcher in the Rye* Holden worries about girls being "given" what he coyly terms "sexual intercourse." Oddly Holden frets over virginity and in an unconvincing scene attacks his roommate Stradlater for "giving the time" to a mutual acquaintance. In a book so consciously wrought in the Freudian image, the reader is compelled to take Holden's rationalization as self-delusion. Holden is afraid of sex rather than fearful for virginity. His motive in not pursuing his relation with the prostitute was certainly not her virginity, nor as he tells us himself, his own virtue by way of his pity for her.

In the hotel room where this passage occurs, he is preoccupied with the "perverts" in other rooms, and at one point he gapes from his window to another wing to see "whether the perverts were still in action." Even a non-Freudian reader might well ask whether this concern

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doesn't cast some doubt on Holden's virility. Later the book does so.

THE SALINGER COSMOS is the commuter world of John Cheever in which the wife-mothers sleep around the country club and the husband-fathers shrug off the shame because the liquor is good at home. In Salinger's "Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut" two suburban women, who had both once married war-time enlisted men, get brutally drunk together. One does bumps and grinds at the other, certifying a subdued Lesbian motif. Meanwhile, the hostess's little girl is ignored cruelly. The big message here is readable in block letters. We are to feel for this human flotsam because in a culture as vile as current American culture, they had no better end. Their Lesbianism and drunkenness and cruelty and stupidity and snobbery are not their fault; nothing is their fault. The fault is with the culture which provides no better choice.

Catcher in the Rye offers a similar relativist vision. Even an interest in certain music requires the reader to assume highly partisan sympathies. A song sung by a white, we are told, would be "corny," but sung by a Negro is "right." The Negro chauvinism seems an effort to be liked for circulating the right gossip as at the high school fraternity, and a very real pathos lies in observing just how many militant minorities Salinger has tried to appease in his writing.

Moving on to the famous Salinger style, his defenders claim him great in the colloquial tradition of Twain and Hemingway. For years his "For Esmé With Love and Squalor" has been promoted as a great short story, especially refined as to the precision and subtlety of its prose. Holden Caulfield's dreary diction we might blame on old Pency's failure to teach him the American language, but not so with Esmé's sensitive soldier friend. The narrator is an experienced and worldly writer, which is to say that if he uses a number of clichés, it is a failure on his part. Following is the delicate opening paragraph of "For Esmé With Love and Squalor," that gem of *New Yorker* virtuosity. The only original touch in the paragraph is in "breathtakingly levelheaded girl," a phrase which if serious is distracting since the wife has no place in the story worth mention, and if sarcastic has a precious flavor.

> Just recently, by air mail, I received an invitation to a wedding that will take place in England on April 18th. It happens to be a wedding I'd give a lot to be able to get to, and when the invitation first arrived, I thought it might just be possible for me to make the trip abroad, expenses be hanged. However, I've since discussed the matter rather extensively with my wife, a breathtakingly levelheaded girl, and we've decided against it—for one thing, I'd completely forgotten that my mother-in-law is looking forward to spending the last two weeks in April with us. I really don't get to see Mother Grencher terribly often, and she's not getting any younger. She's fifty-eight. (As she'd be the first to admit.)

Have I overlooked a subtle mother-in-law joke? But what has a mother-in-law to do with the opening of this grim tale? Neither Salinger nor his mentors at the *New Yorker* have ever been very strong on the Classical Unities or other niceties of rhetoric as "For Esmé With Love and Squalor" will testify. Not a page beyond the above confusion, we find this recondite narrator saying, "I generally sat in a dry place and read a book, often just an axe length away from a ping-pong table." Salinger's literary daddy, Mark Twain, might have told him that only a Salinger cosmopolitan would have included an axe in a figure of speech; and worse, Salinger doesn't know that the measure is not an *axe* but rather an *axe handle*. A man who hangs out as far downtown as Salinger might not pay much mind to these matters, but those of us who try to match the words to the things remain fussy. Salinger is no stylist in the sense that Flaubert was through precision, nor that Mark Twain was through consistency of diction, nor even that Hemingway was, though he most resembles the latter in his restricted vision.

REPUTATIONS HAVE BEEN WON on studies of Salinger symbolism, especially on such as "Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut," the story of the suppressed Lesbians, and on such macabre

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pieces as "The Laughing Man," wherein a crude, lower-class, young man tells some children stories which are obvious confabulations of his own sex life. In these stories the symbolism is the sexual parlor game symbolism taught in sophomore psychology courses all over America. In fact, the standardization of the symbols undoubtedly explains the current popularity of the stories among college youths.

In "Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut" one of the drunk women does bumps and grinds at the other. In the same story the little girl has an imaginary boyfriend who has a sword, which is partly why she likes him. She wears thick myopic glasses and peers at the women, symbolically trying to see what they are about. At the conclusion the mother places the glasses lens down, thus endangering their surface, a symbolic effort to preclude accurate vision on the little girl's part. About the only symbology paraphernalia lacking are the pointing fingers Walt Kelly's *Pogo* comic strip utilizes.

"The Laughing Man" is more shocking in that the story deals with a young man who monitors a group of children in a New York park. The Laughing Man stories are told his charges by the young man. During the narrative the young man breaks off with his girl because of an unknown offense. His serial stories deal with a monster whose head has symbolic significance so pointedly sexual as to be almost obscene, and the symbolism must be read as Freudian in light of the sexual innuendo paralleling the narratives in the speaker's relation with his girl.

As one might have assumed about a world touching sex for its own sake, normal sex will pall and interest will consequently veer toward the unique, that is the aberrant. So the horrors of "The Laughing Man." So, too, what after Nabokov we might call The Lolita Syndrome in Salinger's story "A Perfect Day for Bananafish." Here a highly neurotic young man, Seymour Glass, plays on the beach with a six-year-old girl. The girl is "wearing a canary-yellow two-piece bathing suit, one piece of which she would not actually be needing for another nine or ten years." The subtlety turns on the *need* nine or ten years from now for the halter of the suit when the girl's breasts will have developed. The innuendo introduces a set of budding adolescent breasts on this six-year-old in the reader's mind. Without being altogether facetious, we might style her a Maidenform Bra archetype. Similar kittenish sex reference is very common in Salinger and suggests that sex is the base beyond which he does not go. In the story under discussion, a few pages later, Seymour Glass casually and innocently—if innocence exists in a Freudian universe—disturbs the girl by kissing her foot.

"A Perfect Day for Bananafish" offers another Salinger gimmick worth comment: the deftly manipulated conclusion. Seymour Glass gets the sulks, stares at his sleeping wife, and shoots himself through the brains. Until the close of the last sentence, suspense hangs on whether he will shoot himself or the wife. The reader is so keyed to the physical question that he must neglect the spiritual or even psychological aspects of the suicide.

As a rule Salinger's narratives in moments of conscious introspection pivot on a superficial point of manners. In "For Esmé With Love and Squalor," the hero, supposedly a morose and learned soldier approaching combat, smiles at a little girl he meets in a tea house. His turn of mind adds little profundity to the story. "I smiled back, much less radiantly, keeping my upper lip down over a coal-black G. I. temporary filling showing between two of my front teeth." Salinger *aficionados* have commented that his people all have the profound self-conscious insights of fine artists, but in practice the characters' minds eject trivia like the above. Even in the climactic scene in *Catcher in the Rye*, when Mr. Antolini comes a-creeping with coarse intent, Holden's comical term "perverty" distracts the reader from the implications of coping with an avuncular faggot.

In Salinger's world only physical things in their most mundane sensory nature are discussed or offered up for silent meditation. By definition such a system is logical positivist and is limited to passions. Neither prime causes, universal moral law, nor other concepts of abstract principle are available to the logical positivist. Naturally, then, Salinger reverts to the tribal totems of the *New*

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Yorker advertisers and Manhattan provincials. He has no other where to turn.

EVEN AS A LOGICAL POSITIVIST, though, Salinger is inconsistent. His cast of characters suffers a steady attrition through suicide. If valid extrapersonal values are denied, a character need feel no qualms about anything. Why weep? In truth, why smile? A man could simply ignore as utterly inconsequential the phony utterances of square teachers and related duds, but suicide he would not because death would lack point. Still Salinger wants a deep anti-Existential sympathy for his little league Existentialists although ambiguously he will not acknowledge the value system upon which sympathy is predicated, for such an acknowledgment would require responsibility, which Salinger denies.

Salinger's failure as a philosopher or moralist comes through worst in his skirting the central moral dilemma posed by *Catcher in the Rye*, for evidently the author did not realize the significance of the climactic scene of his novel. The reference is to Mr. Antolini's pass at Holden and the bearing of this scene on the rest of the narrative. In Holden's wanderings, everyone he met was a slob. Only one character, Mr. Antolini, has shown the milk of human kindness. This man is truly concerned for Holden, not merely as a sexual target but as a human being. In simple, Mr. Antolini is the only one in the book capable of constructive, virtuous action. Mr. Antolini does have a social flaw, though: he is homosexual.

The dramatic complication Mr. Antolini raises must be distinctively resolved in order for the book to depict the character development which defines a novel. Holden had been kicked out of school and was afraid to go home. Mr. Antolini took him in, and during the night Holden awoke to find Mr. Antolini stroking his head in the dark. Any doubt of Mr. Antolini's intention is checked by the man's vague, embarrassed refrain: "You're a strange boy," hardly the comment of nocturnal innocence.

HOWEVER HOLDEN RESOLVES THE COMPLICATION, his action will express the judgment of the novel itself since this complication has clewed up the major cords of the narrative. As noted above, Mr. Antolini is a last resort. He is virtuous in being kind, loyal, hospitable, and affectionate; and if good should be nurtured, surely his charity should be done so, for there is little enough of it in the world of this novel. He also is the only youth counselor the book offers above the level of farce. Holden's reaction must reflect judgment on these issues. Furthermore, if he has reached any maturity at all, he will understand the issues and act consciously about them. He need not be sophisticated, but he must be cognizant.

A glance at a moral problem in the purported model for *Catcher in the Rye* will demonstrate the distinction intended here as to consciousness but not necessarily sophistication. In *Huckleberry Finn*, the hero is ashamed to help a poor old widow's property escape, namely his companion Jim, a slave seeking his free family in Yankeeland. Huck accepts that if he helps Jim, he'll never be able to hold his head up to a white person again and that he will go to Hell. He does decide to help Jim, though. His judgment is unsophisticated but extremely moral. He saw the issues clearly. Jim was kind, loyal, brave, loving, and so on; and Huck helped him because of these virtues, despite his social faults. No matter what partisan feeling caste demanded, Huck knew his basis for judgment though he did not have a name for that. The modern Huckleberry Finn, as Holden Caulfield is known, hardly offers such a moral solution to Mr. Antolini's stealthy approach.

What can Holden do? He can beat Mr. Antolini's brains out as an argument for his own virtue. The action would be definite and would set Holden as a cruel person, a selfish person, possibly a perverse person. Or he could allow Mr. Antolini to have his way, thus encouraging his corruption. Or he could take the mature and morally rich position of remaining in the apartment so as to encourage Mr. Antolini's real virtues while protecting him from the weakness of perversion. The need for the last alternative is great because Mr. Antolini is apparently the *only* adult of any known virtue at all and so should be helped lest virtue fail entirely for lack of seed. Thus Holden's choice is of paramount impor-

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tance to the dramatic statement of the book at large.

As a matter of fact, Holden does not elect any of the alternatives offered here. Instead he grabs his shoes and with a flourish of his casual wit lights out downtown. Holden dodged the issue. More to the point, nothing in the passage or otherwhere indicates that Salinger himself perceived the moral nature of the problem. Salinger didn't dodge the issue; he just didn't know it had passed by.

At the heart of any Salinger narrative, whether about Holden's lost weekend or a day in Connecticut or lately about Franny and Zooey in the little book by that name, the temper is self-pity, mopery with intent to creep. Franny describes her world thus: "It's everybody, I mean. Everything everybody does is so—I don't know—not wrong, or even mean, or even stupid necessarily. But just so tiny and meaningless and—sad-making. And the worst part is, if you go bohemian or something like that, you're conforming just as much as everybody else, only in a different way." This is indeed the logical positivist dilemma: a world in which one is unable to judge and so unable to move, to do anything at all to any meaningful end. Fundamentally in such a world only the subjective is true, which requires dramatically that all stories be quite personal and comparatively meaningless outside personal feelings, which themselves cannot have significance to another personality.

A considerable tactical advantage of Salinger's first person narrator is that the author need not be responsible directly for the opinions of his character, as we have noted earlier. Nevertheless, the author is responsible for the sum of his character's actions and opinions. At one point in *Catcher in the Rye* Holden says, "You take somebody that cries their goddam eyes out over phony stuff in the movies, and nine times out of ten they're mean bastards at heart . . ." Demanding but a wee trifle of consistency from this youth, we shall find this statement a judgment on his phony daydream about protecting little kids at play in the rye field. In fact, Holden is the most maudlin of self-sorrowful sentimentalists.

Furthermore, a brief contrast of Holden's judgments suggests that he is not merely a sentimentalist but that he is irrationally demanding in his sentimentality. On page 12 of the Signet edition he passes the insight that "People never notice anything." On page 18 he confesses that "I'm the most terrific liar you ever saw in your life." From there he takes his head and runs in circles for some pages, until on page 81 he fetches up to another judgment: "People are always ruining things for you." Would it make these remarks any the more consistent to wrap a context about them?

The inconsistencies of *Catcher in the Rye* recur in all of Salinger. The story "For Esmé With Love and Squalor" cites the following cryptic notation from the flyleaf of the book, left by a Nazi woman: "Dear God, life is hell." The Salinger hero, a sensitive and sophisticated soldier-writer, broods over the line because it reflects his current emotional turmoil. Neither he nor Salinger can see meaning anywhere except in personal contacts, and that between confused and slightly aberrant individuals. Painfully enough, in the story the two people who reach out to each other do so like two victims being flushed down a drain. There is no purpose in their contact; no motive is available to either. They struggle on for no reason and to no end. In their world is neither hope nor faith, and their Hell is merely a lack of creature comforts. Oh, the story has some mental exercises appended, the solving of a symbol or two, but these are merely "worked" rather than read to any revelation of spiritual or even psychological truth.

Salinger's nearest brush with profundity is a quotation cited by the homosexual teacher in *Catcher in the Rye* from a psychoanalyst. "The mark of the immature man is that he wants to die nobly for a cause, while the mark of the mature man is that he wants to live humbly for one." In the Caulfield-Antolini context the speech signifies the failure of sacrifice, or trying, of faith ultimately. Taken as offered, as the sole truth, the statement casts an inference across the patronizing tone toward Jesus earlier; and outside of Salinger, from our long and ancient literary past it

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undercuts our vision of heroes and their motives from Beowulf and Roland to the nobility of those Welsh Guards who in our own time lay behind at Dunkirk to stall the German armour and save a British army. Like so much of Salinger, the citation turns all values upside down. The martyr is a fool; the coward a hero.

AGGRESSIVE ATTACKS of this sort against our culture have been made by many with Salinger as ammunition. Other propagandists include Nabokov, inventor of the nymphette in *Lolita;* Tennessee Williams, notorious for the queer passions of his drama figures; Henry Miller, the Paris-Big Sur sex-monger; and a legion of others. Such partisan views are held with sufficient vehemence not to be ignored. However, the fervor of the opposition should not mislead us from the statistical conclusion that neither Salinger nor his cohorts have drawn a picture of the average or typical twentieth century American youth. Even taking into account students corrupted by Freudian psychology teachers and beatnik humanities lecturers, the Holden Caulfield type is relatively rare and remains a grotesque, an aberrant.

When our culture was more consciously Christian, aberrants were considered wrong; in mediæval carvings artists pointedly depicted grotesques as evil monsters. In Salinger we find the grotesque not designed to hold our pity because it is a poor soul lost to order, to virtue, but rather designed for our admiration *because it is grotesque.* We do not see Holden across the chasm, lost from our humanity; instead he is offered as a model which our youth is asked to ape.

Quite clearly Salinger draws a picture of evil, and his apologists use that picture as propaganda in an effort to draw us into evil.

Far from being a kind and gentle and mature and objective and above all wise book, *The Catcher in the Rye,* like all of Salinger's fiction, is catty and snide and bigotted in the most thorough sense. It is crassly caste-conscious as the treatment of cabbies and elevator operators witnesses; it is religiously bigotted as the treatment of Catholics and the Salvation Army witnesses; it is caste-conscious as the Negro chauvinism witnesses; it is vehemently anti-Army and even anti-American in equating the American military with the Nazi military. All of these things are the reasons for the book's success, for its success lies in its utility as propaganda.

Let those of us who are Christian and who love life lay this book aside as the weapon of an enemy, and let those who wish it so read it. But let us be honest in this and charge bigotry where it stands. Feeding spite is no charity simply because the spite is against the faith and hope of a Christian vision of life.

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III

SALINGER: The Murky Mirror

by Edward M. Keating

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SOME TIME AGO a young friend of mine said, with some agitation, that "Salinger exposes the *decadence* of our society." He almost rose from his chair. This statement came rather as a shock, since I had read Salinger casually several years before, and had come to the conclusion that here was a young author of some modest talent whose only work would slowly disappear once its novelty had worn off. My friend's agitation, because of its obvious sincerity, prompted me to re-evaluate Salinger's work to see if there was more to it than I had previously imagined.

In the course of setting about this inquiry, I discovered a number of disconcerting obstacles, obstacles of such proportion that under other circumstances I would have dropped the whole thing and pursued less strenuous exercise. However, it was clear that Salinger and his work were enormously fashionable and, in a certain segment of the literary world, almost completely dominated the scene. If this dominance were a good thing, it should be encouraged; if bad, it should be resisted.

The single most serious obstacle to rational inquiry is the emotional controversy over Salinger and his work. The two camps (there seem to be no others) spend most of their time glowering at each other, and very little time in genuine evaluation. If someone wanders into this melee, he is suspected by everyone until he makes his selection of camps, at which moment he is both damned and praised.

Another difficulty in approaching Salinger's work is that, unless you look carefully, you may pass it by. Those familiar with the slimness of Salinger's work don't appreciate this difficulty, but the stranger, hearing all the fuss, is really startled to discover that Salinger has published only one short novel (159 pages in the Signet edition) and approximately a dozen short stories. This is not a plea for bulk, but it does prompt one to hesitate before saying too much about so little. Besides, it is a bit hard on writers like Faulkner, Hemingway, and Greene, who have written great bodies of work, to be in serious competition for the public's favor with a skinny little thing that occupies so little of the literary shelf.

And then there is Salinger himself. Not so long ago, two national magazines, scenting something special, decided to do features on him and had to come out with bits of hearsay, pictures of distant houses and trees, and old family snapshots. Salinger has withdrawn. I am not trying to pry into Salinger's private life, but the result of his withdrawal has been to create a mystique, an intriguing wonder at what's really going on in that block cell, day after day. It is the allure of the mysterious. Beside the matter of mystique, there is the practical one of being able to converse with an author on his work. I realize this may cut against the grain with the "new" critics, but common sense tells us that if we can't find an answer to a problem, we should go to the one who posed it.

Then there is the final difficulty. For some time the word has been out about some future summary statement by Salinger, where he will synthesize, clarify, and summarize not only the entire Glass menage, but everything else that is significant. Some voices, almost tremulous, cryptically whisper the word *Summa*. Who in his right mind would want to proceed to a final statement of his own, knowing that sometime, somewhere, he will be confronted by the author's clear

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contradiction? It would almost seem better to remain silent and wait, no matter how long the wait might prove to be.

And yet, Salinger and his work must be looked into, not merely because he is currently fashionable, but because a study is required that transcends pure literary analysis; and this by the very nature of what is presented to us by Salinger. His is not simple entertainment; *The Catcher in the Rye* isn't just a tale of a boy and his adventures to be compared with *Huckleberry Finn; Franny and Zooey* cannot be called a conversational piece about spiritual regeneration (or degeneration, as you prefer); "Teddy" isn't just a diverting piece about a loathsome prodigy; "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" cannot be labeled a philosophical and literary *faux pas*. In short, you cannot look at the manifest content of his work and come to a comprehensible conclusion as to its nature and, what is more important, its significance.

Indeed, you must go outside the work itself to find significance. The truth is, Salinger's significance doesn't lie in what he says; it lies in the audience that has claimed him as its literary father.

For a writer to have true significance, he must be able to stand the test of time. A work, though accepted in one day, may be ignored by another generation because it fails to speak to them, to strike some responsive chord. A minor writer has his brief hour and is silent. The great writer strikes a universal chord for all time's hearing, and endures. We still cherish Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, but how many others were there whose works were buried with their authors? For every Racine, every Marlowe, every Tolstoy, history's attic is crammed with the discarded efforts of transient artists whose quip, or barb, or camera shot of the hour has lost its sharpness.

If one thing is certain about Salinger's work, it is that it strikes a responsive chord today; he clearly speaks the language of his generation. This, then, raises the question of whether he will endure beyond the moment. Or will he soon become passé, following the literary fall of men like Sinclair Lewis and Clifford Odets? Whether Salinger endures depends solely on whether his audience endures. And I repeat my earlier assertion that Salinger's significance doesn't lie in his work, but in his audience. This, then, requires an analysis of his audience, which will lay bare the deep concern that urges a clear evaluation of Salinger's work.

I suppose one of the most oft-repeated comments about our literary times is that people don't read or, if they do, they don't read enough. This is especially true among our young people. Various studies recently made show that the great majority of students don't read anything, but those who do, invariably read Salinger in general, and *The Catcher in the Rye* in particular. 250,000 copies of *Catcher* sell every year and this has been going on for quite a few years.

Interestingly enough, very few adults bother with Salinger, and of those who do work their way through *Catcher* and *Franny and Zooey*, the majority come away bemused over the attention Salinger gets. They are simply bored, essentially because Salinger doesn't speak to them. They recognize, in his work, themselves when they were high school or college kids, but all that has been left behind; there are more important, more immediate demands on their time, to say nothing of their emotional energies.

Salinger's audience is almost exclusively the young reader, with a few retarded adults whose college days have never faded away and who feel a faint nostalgia for—what?

To begin with, the wonderful bull sessions that begin after dinner and wander effortlessly into the early hours of the morning. The tone of these sessions is invariably breathless, dogmatic, colloquial, impulsive, and strongly emotional, regardless of whether the subject is sex or nuclear test bans. The single most noticeable trait of Salinger's writing is that it is written as if taped from a college bull session, most specifically in the Sophomore year when the novelty of being on one's own has worn off and before upper division sophistication sets in. This atonality of Salinger's work is most glaring in "Pretty Mouth and Green My Eyes," where Lee, a man frequently described as grayhaired, is in bed with a young woman, and is talking on the phone with her hus-

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band. Typical of the dialogue is the following:

Lee: Didn't she (Joanie) leave with you?

Arthur: No. Christ, no. You didn't see her leave at all, then?

Lee: Well, no, as a matter of fact, I didn't, Arthur . . . Actually, as a matter of fact, I didn't see a bloody thing all evening. The minute I got in the door, I got myself involved in one long Jesus of a session with that French poop, Viennese poop—whatever the hell he was . . . What's up? Joanie lost?

Arthur: Oh, Christ. Who knows? I don't know. You know her when she gets all tanked up and rarin' to go. *I* don't know. She *may* have just— . . .

Lee: Where are you now, Arthur? Home?

Arthur: Yeah. Home. Home sweet home. Christ.

Lee: Well, just try to take it a little—what are ya—drunk, or what?

Arthur: I don't know. How the hell do I know?

Lee: All right, now, listen. Relax, just relax . . . You know the Ellenbogens, for Chrissake. What probably happened . . .

The point is, Salinger can't escape his sophomoric inflection. His voice changes only when his perspective is that of a child; then he becomes simple, more direct, and speaks as a child. "The Laughing Man" is a good example of this and is especially effective because horror is seen through the clear eyes of a child.

This talent—I don't think Salinger would be read if he spoke differently—is cardinal to his being accepted. Salinger never talks down to his audience, in sharp contrast to most adults who are trying to reach the Sophomore generation.

Now that Salinger has his audience, what does he say to them? Almost nothing they haven't read or said or heard a hundred times before.

How many times have we all had the exciting fantasy of running away from home? Or from boarding school? Imagine yourself at sixteen, preparing to run away from old Pencey Prep. To heighten the effect, light up a sixteen-year-old's clandestine cigarette; drag deeply, feel the nicotine and tar scorching your virginal lungs, then plan your adventures. Where will you go? *New York!* The only glamorous setting for your fantasy! The bright lights, the anonymity, the golden opportunities for women, and liquor, and —the possibilities are staggering!

But—and here is the nub of the matter—it *is* all fantasy. And so are Holden Caulfield's adventures in New York. Characteristically, nothing really happens. The classic vignette of this volitional impotency is the minor incident of Holden's, immediately upon arriving in New York, going to the phone booth to line up some action. He selects five people to call and then by an almost incredible process of rationalization, blocks all action by finding an excuse for not calling them, name by name, excuse by excuse: D. B. was in Hollywood; Phoebe would be in bed and Holden's parents would answer the phone; Jane Gallagher's mother, "but I didn't feel like it;" Sally Hayes, but her mother might answer; Carl Luce, "but I didn't like him much." By his own admission, Holden spent about twenty minutes or so in the phone booth with no results; no action taken or planned.

Holden's stay in New York consists of setting up potentialities for action and then knocking them aside. Disregarding the morality involved, what adult with a prostitute in his lap (who is obviously trying to arouse his sexual passions) would beg off? But what of the sixteen-year-old boy whose aspirations are sexual but whose real life is rigorously sterile, particularly as regards professional sex, to say nothing of the girl he takes to the prom? It is inconceivable that the fantasy could be translated into overt action.

Interestingly enough, when Salinger puts Holden into a scene of potentiality, such as the protracted one with Sally Hayes, he obviates fulfillment by destroying the relationship. Or if he seeks out the one man-boy, Carl Luce, who can give him the intellectual conversation he insists he seeks, he converts this sort of thing into a crushing bore by having Holden inquire repeatedly into the other's sex life. The scene with Antolini is utterly hopeless; the reader knows this man is sinister from the moment the boy enters his apartment. The abortive seduction is mere tautology, though possibly to some, dangerously

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titillating.

I suppose the most complete fantasy of the entire story is the one Salinger and Holden enter when Phoebe is mentioned. Again, revert to adolescence and see if it rings true. By way of opposition, in Tarkington's *Seventeen*, William's feelings for Jane were far more genuine, but, then, in those days there was less need for escape into unreality.

This idealization of childhood is a recurrent theme in Salinger's work. Indeed, it is his hallmark. And it is so unreal. As parents we love our children, but in reality, they are human and have wills of their own; they can be cruel, destructive, selfish—in short, they are like us, only younger and not fully formed. Needless to say, they have their delightful virtues as well.

So, why does Salinger idealize them? They are the perfect alternative to the frightful prospect of growing up. A child is free, passive, in the sense that things are done for him, decisions made for him, and so on; the child is not really responsible for what he does; there is always a parent to console him if he is hurt; he is ignorant of the world beyond the immediate encircling womb that is warm, sheltering, and soft to the touch.

But the sixteen-year-old boy is on the verge of adulthood, with all its terrible responsibilities, its hazards, its coldness. The man must act. How much easier to be passive, to return to the womb! Of such stuff is fantasy composed.

Life is insistent, and the boy must enter into manhood, but that doesn't prevent him from yearning for an *idealized* childhood. How much easier it is to escape responsibility, the risks that come with responsibility, the agony of decision, particularly when the adult world is portrayed as phony, treacherous, hopeless.

And here is where Salinger cheats. He creates fantasies to escape into and then prevents a return to "reality" by showing it to be unbearable. If a boy could remain a boy forever, there would be no problem, but the boy *must* go on and Salinger shows him what lies ahead, not just in terms of the external world, but, what is far worse, in terms of what lies ahead for his own interior life. Scan every adult character in all of Salinger's work. Is there one that isn't seriously deformed in some way? Let's take his work, piece by piece, and examine the adults.

In the *Catcher in the Rye* we have old Spencer and Dr. Thurmer, who are fools and frauds. Mrs. Morrow's cordiality is a blend of simplicity and gullibility, and Holden's condescension is bald. The taxi drivers are crude and belligerent. Faith Cavendish is a pretentious tart, the Seattle triplets are yokels, and Maurice is a pimp serving up a mechanical prostitute. The naïve nuns and their Protestant counterparts, the Salvation Army girls, are treated with bland contempt; Holden blows smoke in their faces. Mr. and Mrs. Antolini are scarcely an ideal couple, and by strong implication, Holden's parents are unsympathetic and despotic. What boy would want to associate with a crowd like that? Or become like them in just a few short years?

And then there is *Franny and Zooey*. The only real adult, that is, someone *in loco parentis* to the central characters, is Bessie Glass, carefully outfitted to be a "character"; someone drawn in such a way as to reduce her to the level of her children. She is slovenly, she is dumpy, she smokes on the level and frequency of all Salinger's juvenile characters. She is a contemporary of Zooey's, and not a very bright one at that. The off-stage adults are Seymour, Salinger's ultimate expression of perfection, but he is a suicide. Buddy is contemplating suicide, and the others, Boo Boo, Waker, and Walt (dead) are scarcely defined, at least not enough to be considered characters in the story.

In "A Perfect Day for Bananafish," we witness Seymour's suicide after a slight, boorish scene with a snob with salve on her nose. Salinger equates Seymour's loveliness with Sybil's naïveté and executes that which is lovely. Seymour is not an adult except in death, the result of an external action taken.

In "Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut," the cook is petulant and lazy. Mary Jane and Eloise live solely in the past, only to have the idyll shattered by Ramona's intrusion. Ramona, a lost, unattractive child, is the consequence of sexual intercourse, again an action, and is a constant reminder

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of the agony of the *now* of life as lived by adults. The story ends on the painful note of Eloise shaking Mary Jane's arm and pleading, "I was a nice girl, wasn't I?"

In "Just Before The War With The Eskimos," there are no adults, only their children, a despicable lot.

"The Laughing Man" contains an adult whom I consider the most horrible of all Salinger's creatures. He binds a group of small boys to him by his attractive manliness and then, over a considerable time, tells them a depraved story. And there is the problem of Mary Hudson, that almost ethereal beauty who remains for a time on the periphery and then disappears, leaving a disturbing mystery behind. Something is wrong; she and the Chief are involved in some adult tragedy that can only baffle and disturb the small boy telling the story.

THE SERVANT, Sandra, and the cleaning woman, Mrs. Snell, who open up "Down At The Dinghy," are not characters. They are Salinger's Greek chorus and expositors before it is revealed that they were the source of Lionel's anguish. Boo Boo's introductory description—"She was a small, almost hipless girl of twenty-five . . ."—and everything that follows prepares for the descent into little Lionel's world, a world, incidentally, that he controls with a firm hand. It is Boo Boo who submits and eventually steps down into the dinghy.

"For Esmé—With Love and Squalor" is pretty much an imitation of "Down At The Dinghy." The children, Esmé and Charles, completely take the play away from the adult, X. He looks to Esmé for his very sanity and Esmé's condescension is patent. Clay is crude, slightly salacious, and constantly harps on X's physical and psychological disintegration.

The adults, the only characters in "Pretty Mouth and Green My Eyes" are two adulterers, and a drunken cuckold.

Bobby Agadganian, at the outset of "De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period," is described as "my late ribald stepfather," who turned away from being a "dead stockbroker" and affiliated himself with art. Salinger disposes of the mother by a convenient, off-stage death, and Bobby and our young friend become roommates. Bobby is painted as being a grand guy and is dead. The only other adults are the oriental pair who are inferior and are either stupid or crooks, the point never being made clear.

"Teddy" contains two infantile and selfish parents. The off-stage intellectuals are bumpkins when compared to Teddy. As usual with Salinger, the adult must come down to the child's level where he can then be dominated by the child. The young man, Nicholson, who talks endlessly with Teddy, is a toady and a fop.

TO SUMMARIZE: adults are either patently deformed or are totally ineffectual, being reduced to creatures dominable by small children. There is *no* exception to this.

And it is precisely here that Salinger cheats. In a literary work, particulars stand for universals. If there are no character variations, the assumption is that there are no exceptions. If Salinger would present a *single* worthwhile adult character, the indictment would fall. But he doesn't. The ultimate effect of his treatment of adults is to portray the adult world as something despicable, to be avoided at all costs. Hence, the need to remain in a perpetual fantasy where the child can manipulate the adult, or the adolescent can revert to an idealized childhood. Salinger offers his reader a third possibility that is even more terrible: the way of death. Death, for Salinger, is the final negation, the ultimate escape.

Another characteristic of Salinger's work is the total estrangement between parent and child. A parent is cold, lacks understanding, or is stupid. A parent who fails to act as a parent, who is more a buddy or a foil is welcome. Bessie Glass is scarcely distinguishable from Zooey except when she takes the part of a mother and tries to get Franny to take some broth, at which point she becomes both stupid and imperceptive. This is not just an idle observation; it goes to the heart of the matter, because Salinger's treatment of the relationship coincides with the opinions of his young readers. This, then, is what the young American thinks of his family. He is alone, he is afraid, he faces a hopeless future, and he seeks

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escape. Salinger merely lends respectability to this wish.

In a larger sense, Salinger has given a certain justification for the state of things in our culture. And, by implication, he is telling the young people that it is all right to escape, to rebel against authority, to wander aimlessly in deadly dull conversations, to dread what lies ahead, to yearn for childhood, to seek the peace of death. But above all, he glamorizes the avoidance of responsibility.

Literature is not a thing apart. It is an intimate part of reality in that it expresses the reality that is within man. Salinger is not the least bit responsible for the present state of affairs; he has merely exposed the truth in terms of the deepest feelings of America's young people.

And this is why a study of Salinger is so valuable. Today we listen too closely to professional analysts, ranging from statistics to reports of juvenile authorities. Salinger, on the other hand, speaks with the voice of the common man, and the sound and substance are hideous.

These states of mind I have sketched above are actually the states of mind that dominate our rising generation. These states didn't just happen spontaneously. The generation that bred these young people and the generations that bred before them created this mounting stream of conscience that is now threatening our civilization. We live in an age of fear for the future, we feel the wrenching loss of our once-upon-a-time innocence, we rage in bafflement at those who bred our unhappy condition, and we would escape if we could. We seek out the fantasy and pretend that all is well, but fantasies, under the pressure of reality, break down and the pain of returning to reality is doubled.

There is a new religion rising out of the East that threatens everything we hold precious; that finds our present state of decay incapable of effective resistance. And what do we do about it? Nothing. We know what we are against, but do we know what we are for?

Salinger is abundantly clear as to what he is against. Does he offer a solution? Does he say what he is for?

Franny and Zooey presents Salinger's cure for the spiritual sickness of our times. Zooey's concern is over Franny's withdrawal, not her spiritual problem. She can have any religious ideas and techniques as long as she gets with it and remains part of this world.

Franny and Zooey is vintage Salinger. It is an endless conversation piece that wanders off in all directions, its tone is sophomoric breathlessness, made slightly heady by an overdose of cigar smells and cigarette smoke. It ends on a note that is distilled Salinger philosophy: a sentimental mixture of bathos and pantheism. Salinger wants us to share his emotional spirituality, something that is vague, slightly hysterical, romantic, of effortless implementation, culminating in a dreamless, eternal sleep. Franny's first action, after learning that the "Fat Lady Is Christ," was to sweep away the smoking equipment, fall into bed and dissolve into sleep. It was a "deep, dreamless sleep." At this point the story ends, sleep being the universal analogy for death. Religion is Salinger's opiate that dissolves man into a painless, euphoric, eternal evaporation. Again, this is merely an escape from reality, in the present instance, spiritual reality.

BUT THEN, doesn't this really reflect the current state of religious thinking? *Franny and Zooey* is no parody; it is literal, with unnerving accuracy. It is as if a tape had been made of a bull session on religion.

My complaint is not with Salinger, though I personally find his work at times irritating and pretentious. My complaint is with those of us who have led our civilization down this primrose path. We have made Salinger what he is today, the literary father of our children, and if Salinger endures it will be because his audience endures. And the audience is our responsibility.

I would like to see Salinger's work find a haven in history's attic. Though I wish the man well, I can't help hating him for pricking my conscience. The only way to get rid of the pain is to remove the cause, which isn't Salinger. It is ourselves and our values, ourselves and our failings, ourselves and our responsibilities.

And first, in this act of removal, must be the spiritual explorations that will lead us to a rock on which to wage the eternal battle.

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ROBERT BRIGGS

Confessions of a San Francisco Snowman

Near Hills
the 16th

old man—

So you saw G- in Boston?

A few hours after I received your letter, he stopped by. Told of seeing you, mentioned nothing of Crow's talk. I must confess this piqued me so I offered to play the tape, but he contended he had had enough of the matter. Besides, he was going to the Lakes for the holiday and it was raining. Apparently this took up all his irritation.

I don't know what he told you about the Alum meeting. He had met Crow a month before and, since Crow's book was out, asked him to speak. Asked to speak, speak Crow did. I've no way of knowing what else you've heard of the affair so I thought I would transcribe the whole thing for you here. Even though the whole thing has no whole.

I frankly think G- was a bit rough on Crow. Perhaps afterwards he had good reason, yet all I did was tape the speech. I think I'll save it for ten years. Right now I don't pout with G- nor do I defend your friend.

Let me give you the thing in order.

Crow looked old. Wasn't he just a year ahead of you? He's paunchy, badly colored and cared for. His teeth are shot. (G- for all his martiniism never looked so bad.) The night he came to speak he brought his wife which fried the bachelor theme. That was covered by their having to leave for St. Louis that night. Being between-the-hotel-and-the-depot kind of thing.

I felt he looked sad. Sad when he looked sad and sad when he looked happy. He propped himself with a nice enough attention but you had the feeling he would have been just as glad if the place were empty.

Everyone was polite about the wife—you can't be much else about wives—and G- was smooth as ever getting the meal out, the meeting on, over and introducing him. No one had seen him for eleven years. How terribly unprepared we were for what we got.

They sat the wife with Klipp (accounting's famous mistake) and Terrazine (the chocolate king), most likely shaking those two mollies no end. Well—let me get on.

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It was weird. When he rose to speak he wasn't the same man. If I hadn't met him before and been able to know we were in the panel room of the old house, I'd have been convinced he'd snuck out and belted a dozen drinks. He was forceful in the beginning. He began by saying he wanted to cover a "somewhat nonromantic look at a romantic aspect." That he would lecture—that was the word—"lecture on a dissertation written eighteen years previous, a dissertation written for empty rooms."

It was serious, almost profound the way he said it. So much so Klipp put down his toothpick.

Now you know in these talks the speaker is never held to giving a subject beforehand. If he has one he's not bothered for it, usually. And, I think this works. Except that puffy British big game hunter. Remember that clown? So put out over America. They should have let that bastard walk back to the city.

All that—let me go on. I'll have to get the recorder out and transcribe what he said. I was going to have my secretary make copies of it but she's been ineffectual all week and I've been at the plant. I will though, and mail you one. Anyway. Anyway. Crow really got to everyone with this. Plus he has a fine voice and good delivery. Yet, suddenly he mumbled: "a secret for you here, gathered on the wharves in my closet."

I've got the recorder now. The above quotes are right. I remembered exactly. The tape picks up the attention he was getting. It was strange. I'll transcribe.

O, one other thing about this opening, he went for some water and the glass was empty. G- filled it for him but, by then he didn't want any. He starts with something not one person noticed. Starts: "I, I wanted to speak this morning—" hell, by this time it was ten thirty at night.

I, I wanted to speak this morning about writing. I wanted to say to all those who would be writers but still have hungers for law, or medicine, or hardware sales—you'd best pursue the latter and limit your writing to the re-readings of secret festerings of juvenile manuscripts gone over every three years, then five years —then, not at all. A saner course.

And year in, year out, as you reject new literary prophets with the undisclosed confidence of what you could have done, you will see steak, a supper; marriage, love; and sex, that certain Christmas waited for so long. Travel will be educational, refreshing. Time will go humping by, giving society a dignity you could never have accorded it twenty years earlier in North Beach when you publicly decided to go to Swagilliana to spend X-years in a Swat monastery where you might devote tensionless time to the study of Swing, a new concept overlooked by Western Man for almost nine centuries.

Writing, when you get there, if you decide to go, is quick with realities. After your departure you can chugg until the damned engine that first hauls you runs out . . . and you are forced into night watchmanship or other acreage of attention in the vast, deep mull of human earn.

What I speak of here is more the peril of non-academic function. It is an announcement that the writer is quite unfortunately drawn to glories of expression that, unbeknown to him, are fostered by unreading publics. Publics initially guided by virginal and quasi-virginal high school teachers throughout America and, I fear, the world. In joining the ranks of Lettres at the age of seven, nine or fifteen the first result is a growth. Growth of a very dressable idiot child known as *Ergo Ego*. *Ergo Ego* attached to the navel—or brain —depending upon the end of the particular philosophy involved.

By now he had worn his initial impression thin. Another few minutes of such bland generality and he would have been dead. I felt he sensed this.

O, blessed Ego, connected to your tongue, filling your mouth with clever things to say. More than enough to fill every dive and bistro in which you defensively attack, and offensively hide. Every place you motor in and out and down from. You feel this marvelous luck! This pimple headed archer a magnificent consort. You need to pass thirty on the floor to see he caused you to blab much you should have written down and, in the popularity afforded, caused you to become religiously lazy and petulantly hooked. After thirty—off the floor—you realize misery, death, addictions, procrastinations, flagellation . . .

After thirty you admit the tips of neurosis that first rooted you to performance. You see you are where you are, which is, my friends, a very small town. That you are a common citizen of this place ever tied to its location by knowing it has no city limit.

Yes . . . well. With or without money you are broke, or might as well be. Money is the cookie in the unattended jar. But! All is not bleak. You have something.

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Too old for executive training programs, you have developed powerful observatory and investigative faculties. Senses for everything—almost. Upon entering a room you know instinctively who has a cold. Late at night the gait of a passing figure can be determined sad or happy. Thousands of tools and devices. Skills and living desire! The desire is chancedly offset by fatigue —but—you are all right.

Ah, all watching you. Your watching intuitiveness: huge eyes, bass drum ears, funnel nose, silent mouth depicting too many flowers. The only real complication of these reserves is their normal appearance to others who note you. Especially other writers to whom your senses appear frankly dulled, useless to Lettres, let alone classic expression.

At this, small applause. I feel almost proud of our little group. However, at the close, they were themselves.

Thus, actuality falls into glaring place. You begin a more gingered roam in vaster spaces of human experience, occasionally seeing in the spectacular night the light lit by psychology in honor of human navigation. New. Visible. A burning match in a Wyoming Wild. Now, for you it is clear why Officer Showflower suffers from hemophilia; That Father Rance is not complacent over his rich congregation; Why Mrs. Leonard shops in silence.

So, you put it all down. There! You've done it! Or—you think you have. You have enlightened no one really. All you've accomplished is to bind yourself to the faceless few in New York who control those who contact you. Actually, you are assigned to the mailman and through frustrating changes of address you passionately carry out your assignment, waiting daily, even Sundays, when you know he'll not come. Every six months or so he does come, with something like: 'Your idea of a three thousand page novel on the mental process of appetite within the buried self was exciting to all of us here. However, at this time, we feel more work on a Fireless Cookbook would be a thing lending more to your particular development.' That, or: 'Grutt & Company find it impossible at this time to advance you fifty dollars. Trends show! Ends know! Sales bale! TRA-ERRUMP! . . . the rash advancement of monies in the past has proven to be—Twee! What you did with what you do is a matter we cannot personally be—.'

More applause. As I transcribe this I forget you're not listening.

And even, even after publishing you're told of Will Railey whom everyone at Sea Niche felt would have made 'such an excellent writer.' Now, you know Will Railey. You know he would have done in Lettres exactly what he did on the outside—marry the most promiscuous girl, have five children, and set a beer drinking record at the American Legion. You say nothing. You can't. You're being driven to a lecture, you have to be involved. This organization is smart, they don't give the check until after the evening is over, when you've bobbed the chance at meeting the only attractive girl there by weathering the pinch of the chairman's wife. All these things . . . no matter. You have to leave as soon as possible. Right after dinner they turned off the lights to show slides of their contest winners enplaning for Hawaii. Off two of the platters near you, neatly curled in your pocket, you have three pieces of ham. A telltale spot is appearing on your coat. You don't mind that, but it's ruining your last pack of cigarettes . . . all these things.

Getting money from a once-charitable relative, you have to explain why the writing of novels is such a timeless process, only to be indignantly confronted with a review from the Presbyterian Cossack: 'Horton Eigumm just published a best seller, at the age of nineteen! Church member, son of a local real estate doctor, did the whole thing in London without touching a penny of his trust.' O, stuck again! Insisting this for what it is, you blabber at great lengths of the cause and effect involved here. Eigumm graduated from high school at nine. Besides, he doesn't write fiction, he writes Princetonian mystery.

It's not worth it. You take the seventy-five dollars but wipe the source off your list, returning west to National City, where a friend of two months has promised connection enough to get you a bartending job in Tijuana. Ninety dollars a week, two hours a night, allowing plenty of time to write in solitude by the deserted ocean . . . just . . . just south of the border. Months later, you've only reached Oakland in time to fall in love with a glittering teenage woman who says very little but whose physical properties are more than art can refute. O, all through it again. Renting that inevitable mint-green apartment with the wall bed full of dust, an empty holster, old newspapers . . . left by some meaningful soul en route to Fairbanks to be a huskie tracker for a University of California Zoological Research Team.

You borrow fifty dollars more and flee to the Mexican wilds to recuperate with the others—madder Dreisers, pottier Rimbauds, jazzier delinquents in the struggle of evaluating what is basically good but in dire need of harsher considerations by all: those at the blue stop light; those sitting against the plastic walls of the windowless corporations; those leaving every bored bedroom to follow any muttering voice entering the public listening rooms to shout: I Love God!

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After shouting this, he paused. He had captivated his audience. He turned and looked, strangely, as if he were trying to reassure himself of where he was. This is the point of the tape where the edge of attention begins to fall.

You are where you were to be. A prophet in a thin way, faced with the desperateness of the growing book-buying public whose increasing insistences of conscience are causing universal disruption, evidenced in mishandled budgets, maddening religiosity, bad complexion, sloppy child rearing, and impotency.

You are a knight of explanation. There is much you must do for man, but you drink too much, or have that perverse habit of slinking into bedrooms to smoke those little cigarettes. It does not occur that you are still the same, with the exception of eyes, ears, and nose defined earlier. You seek the sane shade.

If the bastards would just read it and not ask what it means!

You might like to join them from one traipse after another to Doctor Wiggly's night course on the unctional function of the psycho role, or to the Unitarian Church coffee hour beginning an hour and five minutes after the services—always good for one promising introduction after another.

By this time, by this time, you've fallen from all the literary movements and moved from all the literary falls. You wander in a spectrum of private sky . . . getting a letter from a friend of one of the colleges you attended. He's coming to town and insists you get together. Fine enough. You're merely unemployed as far as he's concerned, yet his expense account covers your twenty-eight dollar dinner and long talks of who married whom and why. The final chat is about his wife. He speaks at great length of her. Afterwards, to you, she is nothing more than a cute skeleton at the controls of a complex stove, wondering how the frozen food will turn out.

So, you part on the corner of two forty-five and three a.m. You return to your room, tipsy. What it cost could have lasted you a month. Still . . . you haven't spent what amount you do have. You watch some of the night, sitting, sobering up enough to stuff your dead bedding into the pillowcase, leave the room and go into the night to splurge on the laundromat, stopping to step into a dark alley somewhere to add your only set of underwear.

Attention to his talking—I don't know what else you would call it—was now dependent solely upon propriety. What followed was not accorded what the earlier received. Someone, Talper or Klipp, got up and quietly left.

Landmarks go by. You see where there is more delinquency among adults emotionally, than children socially. Your observations are reviewed on lazy raining mornings in the bakeries, talking politics with non-college anarchists. Your local reputation is growing. Still limited to the neighborhoods, nonetheless, it makes you brunt of the younger expressionalists who trap you with rash babble of brash freedoms. Deadly people who allow you to read this and that. Half finished, half typed snatches of:

> 'Something that just came! I put it down—it's not all I mean. I did a better one in pottery yesterday. Nunutza teaches coffee tables. Far out! Stresses texture. For a gas I'm using chips from old Wayne King records.'

That, or you are cornered by 'my period' types. Boxed into hearing from all kinds of rice paper Van Goghs, always talking about something eastern:

> 'Twezi! He does the sensitive horses in heat, with manes flying on the bottom of old fortune cookie boxes. The boxes are hard to come by. The orientals only give them to other orientals. You know how they are.'

. . . Schooled years before . . . when you got drunk before the opening lecture of Logic One. Going to hear the professor muse: 'In life there is much to consider.' Without realizing the volume of your voice, you ended your philosophy career right there by interjecting: 'Hell! *I* could have come up with that!'

O, you remember. There is no need of order now. You recall your early poem on psychoanalysis. You began: 'Bless me, doctor/I have flipped.' Now you know. Now you know that truth in life and truth in art are opposite matters, for your first short story was an eight pager, the first five dealing with the existentialist removal of a lace garter belt, thus affording a new view into the psychology of women.

You know the modern novel is divided into two groups: the constructed and the exploded. You have rejected the latter. And need for the former does not render license to explore drawers, examine clothes closets, pocket books, other peoples' mail, diaries and private papers. This is a series of phases—you have one left. It happens.

You re-meet an old high school sweetheart. *The* one, the single woman of them all who could have—as far as you are eternally concerned—qualified for the crown of the child bride. The place is her husband's bedroom; he is not there. She turns out to be a vicious chatterbox who snores. Off you go into the long night, on the last thousandth walk, to know writing is written to determine what is serious and why it becomes tragic. Only by this does writing link experience with mystery.

When you get back you'll have to listen to the entire tape. He paused here. I don't remember

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what the audience was doing. Probably wondering if he had finished. He hadn't. He finished by saying:

Though in dubious shape, you have a key key. That is . . . that is . . . there can be no pronouncement. You . . . You can't tell it. You must show it. If only I could convince you of this! . . . But I can't. No one can. Our mad hassles are for nothing. All the particular pains and kicks are freaked by that in mankind which will not be ordered, demanding to be gently led. Prophecy is an heirloom of sorts. Throw the damned thing away! Tell the true situation . . . of people in fantasy and pattern. Remember: enlighten. Never command. The shrewdest thing you can do now is take vitamins and sleep regularly. Practice showing without telling . . . all the turns from all the odd times, the soft spells. The hard and tender moments that line each way. See a dentist and pass on to others what others refuse to believe you possess.

Ah! One thing more . . . one thing . . . O, never mind, never mind. . . . Thank you very much.

That's all of it.

There was brief applause. He sat down amid the departures and declarations of seeing each other later. Their reactions were few. Dodd felt the thing was interesting enough, but, he said, "A little raw in spots." Old man Burchess, who is currently chairman, left, giving G- the check to give to Crow.

Crow said he had a headache, but smiled and asked G- for a ride. They were going to St. Louis (I told you that). It was late and G- said he couldn't take them to the airport, but he would as far as the Airlines Terminal Building. I'd just begun putting the recorder away and had agreed to go when it turned out they didn't need a ride to the airport or the Airlines Terminal Building. They were taking a bus. Here, I'm guilty. I took the following down on tape:

G-: A bus? To St. Louis?
Crow: Ah, we were going—my wife's pregnant.
G-: I'm happy to hear that.
Crow: Yeah. You don't know a doctor, do you?
G-: Not in St. Louis.
Crow: Well, I didn't mean that, really, Millium, that's my wife's—.
G-: I didn't think her name was Betty.
Crow: Well, anyway, she's getting along.
G-: How pregnant is she?
Crow: Five months.
G-: There's no need to rush into things.

(The above is between us.)

He went back and got the girl. Somebody stopped him and told him they liked his speech. I didn't get this on the tape.

We drove them. Actually, the girl is pretty. She has a lovely smile; she is very tall, with blonde hair she piles on the top of her head. She was uncomfortable from the pregnancy, frankly drabbed. I rode in the back with her. Crow turned around and mentioned the check was two hundred instead of the agreed one fifty (this was G-'s doing of two days' previous). Putting her arm forward, she leaned and kidded him privately.

On the way back G- and I said nothing of the evening, but I couldn't help thinking of them on that bus. It occurred to me, neither of us had asked what they were ever going to do in St. Louis.

Stop when you get back. I'll play the tape.

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A PORTFOLIO

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OF POETRY

by
James Schevill

VERSAILLES TO CHARTRES, 1961

ROUSSEAU TAKES HIS FIVE CHILDREN
TO THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL

DESCARTES COMPOSES A BALLET
AT THE END OF HIS LIFE

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VERSAILLES TO CHARTRES, 1961

The wrong pilgrimage, Péguy!
Not Notre Dame to Chartres,
spirit to spirit,
But Versailles to Chartres,
secular to sacred force,
Horizontal power to vertical passion.

At Versailles, ancient stones of the 'royal pavement'
Still cluster around the statue of the Sun King
Rearing on his horse, stone commander,
But the palace decays, pomp sags in poverty,
The park flowers in the twentieth century
Of tourists strapped to cameras,
And haggling French housewives
hard over baby carriages:
They execute the King daily
by complacence in the park.
Old Versailles glitters in the Galerie des Glaces,
Grimacing that the *Grand Siecle* died in mirrors.
Gone the flower-tubs of solid silver,
The curling white and gold brocade curtains,
The long Savonnerie carpets creating the lush floor,
The dais and silver throne for the Sun King
To shimmer in his heat to bending courtiers.

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At Versailles, form became fatal:
A door was never knocked, but scratched
With a fingernail lengthened for the task;
Position of chairs was proud hierarchy:
    At the *petit coucher*, following the *grand coucher*,
    The elect could watch the king, *pour la forme*,
    Sitting grandly on his commode.
Form, form, Louis murdered the ground
To create Engineers of Water,
Who could flow streams, foam fountains,
To curve the stiff formality of gardens
Into cool forms for his hot King's eye,
Until his fancy froze in the mirrors
With corpses of soldiers who died, digging,
Campaigning for water on the battlefield of Versailles.
    Water fades in the glare of formal glass
    Until only the mocking glass remains,
    Perfect form of invisible history.

No mirrors at Chartres, no self-reflections,
Henry Adams there, too, puritan Yank,
        groping for impossible unity,
Gaping at the singular and simple spires—
        the singular and simple spires!
See them in space, not in bits, in books,
Searching spires over brown plains of wheat.

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The singular steeple commands decoration,
Black crows swoop into the tracery;
Le Brun Kéris called the singular spire:
"A bush of thorns crackling in the fire."
No bush, but man's ornamental tree,
His stone leaves and delicate, metal branches,
His singular, twining, dance of the spirit
That twists into timelessness.
Yet is decoration dedication?
Or is simplicity, nakedness, true devotion?
"The Middle Ages admired difference."
Not difference! Opposition for safety!
The simple spire, the shorter one,
Shrewd height, that cannot rival singularity,
Questions the singular, towering tree.
Beneath the spires, gargoyles grimace
In grins of evil on doors and exterior walls,
Writhing as rain-spouts to contain
All evil spirits from entering sanctuary.
Enter.
Blue, out of darkness, the Gothic windows
Flow from France to create a color for the world,
A pure blue unmatched since the twelfth century,
Said to shine from grinding down sapphires.
Isaiah prophesies:
"And then shall come forth a rod
Out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow
Out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord
Shall rest upon him."
In the window of Jesse,
The interior tree of life bursts from his loins,
Glowing through stone into the singular tree,
The enigmatic ornaments of man's thrust into eternity.

Below in the twentieth century,
Bells clang for a funeral,
And a heavy black casket
Pokes like a beetle into the cathedral,
Crawling down the aisle to the death mass,
While, high above, a king from Jesse's tree
Clings to the white branches of eternal life
Flowering in brilliant blue air
that has no sky.

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ROUSSEAU TAKES HIS FIVE NATURAL CHILDREN TO THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL

I

I search for a man in the integrity of Nature,
And this man shall be myself. I know my heart
And have studied mankind. Such as I was,
I declare myself, sometimes vile and despicable;
At other times, virtuous, generous, and sublime.

My birth cost my mother her life
And was the first of my misfortunes.
Of all the gifts, Heaven gave my parents,
Only a feeling heart descended to me.
I wandered in Nature to feel the bliss of God.

II

My mistress was a needlewoman of good family.
Always a friend to decency in manners
And conversation, I took her part.
She saw in me an honest man, and I perceived
In her a simple heart, devoid of coquetry.

At first, amusement was my only object;
Then, I found that I had given myself a companion.
I began by declaring to her shyness
That I would never abandon or marry her,
And so, we began to conceive bastards.

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III

Too sincere and haughty in my inquiring mind,
I had to examine the destiny of my children
According to the laws of Nature, Justice, and Reason,
And those of that Religion, holy and eternal,
Which men have polluted with purest desire.

I trembled to entrust them to their mother's family,
Ill brought up, to be still worse educated.
In abandoning my children to public education
For want of the means of bringing them up,
I considered myself a member of the Republic of Plato.

IV

Sometimes, in the privacy of my study,
With my hands pressed tight over my eyes,
Or in the darkness of the night,
I think that there is no God.
But I see the rising of the Sun,

As it scatters mists that cover the earth
And lays bare the wondrous, glittering
Scene of Nature; my clouded soul clears,
I find my faith again, and my God,
And I prostrate myself in his natural world.

V

I have written the truth; whoever examines my character
And pronounces me dishonest, deserves the gibbet.
The noble, savage man, when he has dined, is
At peace with all Nature; natural,
We sense the glad mystery of God.

Only by institutions is man made bad,
Yet that is my fear of the Foundling Hospital.
The faces of my children I have never known
Flare behind the walls of that grey school
And I see them, forever, at their education.

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DESCARTES COMPOSES A BALLET AT THE END OF HIS LIFE

Death looks like my natural daughter
Who died at the age of five; she dances
Toward me in her skeleton; I cannot remember
Her mother, though, long ago, it was a warm embrace.
Cold of death here in Stockholm. I rise
At five every morning to teach Queen Christina
In her study. She is killing me with arguments
Of how to live happily in sight of God and man.
Always I yearned for morning hours in bed
And warmth for thought. In the Bavarian Army
During the Thirty Years War, I climbed in a stove
Each ice-shattered morning to keep warm
And meditate. The Queen is my stove,
Impatient youth, commanding mistress of logic.
With her I have analyzed love, and the Passions
Of the Soul residing in the tiny pineal gland.
Her Majesty of Argument has set me to compose a ballet:
Scepticism dances toward my luring senses.
Am I sitting by this fire in my dressing gown?

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Sometimes I dream I sit here quietly for warmth,
When I am naked in bed. Madmen have such dreams;
But there remains something I cannot doubt.
No demon can deceive me if I do not exist.
Though I think everything false, I am something
Since I think; *I think, therefore I am:*
Small defense against this passionate Queen,
Who walks in logical snow to freeze my age.
I have delved in matter and freed its substance
From the ancient world, but not from God.
Mind and matter are God's creatures, His will,
And hence distinct from Him. They dance
A wonderful science for which I went
On pilgrimage to the shrine of the Blessed Virgin.
The dancers shall whirl in passion of faith
Out of the sun-lit south in this dark north.
God, being good, will not deceive their limbs;
If they stumble, it is their whirling will,
Her will to death that kills me in this cold land.
Even if mind sleeps in my daughter and madmen,
God's mind will dance in this ballet
And the Queen see my dancers triumph over death.
Why should we marvel if the light reflected
From the body of a wolf into the eyes of sheep
Excites them to quick flight? Mind is music,
God is beyond, God stands to himself,
Invisible dancer who dances quicksilver vision.

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the goldfish

L. W. MICHAELSON

And that was the way it happened. It was Marcy's ninth birthday and at the party little Hillary Nash came, all pigtails, glasses, and buck teeth and said, "Here's your birthday present, and where's the ice cream?" Everybody tittered politely and then Hillary said, "Oh, you better open them right now or they might die," and she ran into the next room laughing, and Marcy, green eyes aflame, eager hands flying over the ribbons and tissue, squealed "oh" with delight and her chubby fingers pulled out a gleaming fishbowl—and there were two goldfish, one the usual orange and gold and the other grey-black, looking more like a shadow than a fish.

Someone said, "Oh, a black goldfish!" And Marcy asked if there was a "gold blackfish," and the bowl was put on the mantle with the rest of the presents but not before Mother answered Marcy: "Oh, don't be silly! It's just like black sheep. Mamma Nature does it just for fun." But it wasn't until later when we tried to trace where the present came from did we find out much about the black one.

After the party, of course, Marcy went over her gifts one by one, carefully touching each one to see if she was dreaming, and then laying it aside for future reference: the games, the doll tea sets, and all. And then she came at last to the gleaming bowl. "This is my mostest favorite," she said. "I've never had anyone give me goldfishes on my birthday. And see! Here's the fish food and it says to feed them once a day."

And Marcy prattled on and on about the fish and Aunt Tomasina leaned over to tell Marcy not to put her hands in the water, that fish were meant to look at and not to play with and that she must keep them up high on the mantle because of Timmy the cat, and that was about all for that day except Gramps wandered in from outside where he had been hiding to keep away from the birthday party and the noise, and he said: "Gawd amight! Another pet, yet! We got cats, stray dogs, old mice, and now goldfish!"

But Marcy spoke up quickly defending her new pets: "But they don't make any noise, Grampy," she said, "and they don't eat much.

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See!" And Marcy held up her hands to show what a "tiny, tiny bit" the goldfish ate. But Gramps said, "Humph!" And he looked in the bowl and said humph again. "A black one, too! A mean little bugger if I ever saw one." And that was about all for that day. Except someone, I forget who, maybe Gramps said, "What you gonna name them?" And Marcy couldn't think and Gramps said, "To and Fro," and he laughed and slapped his good knee, but Marcy didn't think it was funny and she said, "No, my goldfish! I'll name them." And then she said "Goldy" for one and the black one she couldn't think of a name and Aunt Tomasina said, " 'Rumpelstiltskin,' maybe." And Marcy screamed, "No! No!"

"Not a bad name. The gold and then the bad dwarf with his black. . . ." But then Gramps saw Marcy was beginning to cry. "Better we stick to To and Fro," he said and he went off to his room on the first floor and that was all about the goldfish for the first day.

On the second day Tomasina had to warn Marcy about the cat, Timmy; he had been looking up thoughtfully at the fish on the high mantle, and Tomasina said, too, not to feed them too much and to change their water once a week, but Gramps said, no, you don't change water much anymore because of the snails, and we all peered closely and sure enough there were two or three tiny snails and a long fern that coiled like a green snake about a sunken fish castle.

Nobody remembered seeing the castle before, or the white and blue pebbles on the bottom yesterday at the party, and Mother, who had strode into the room at this, spoke up in her loud voice and said she had gone down to the pet store—the only pet store in town—and she had gotten the pebbles and the castle with the hole in the middle, and that she had asked about the black goldfish and the man at the pet shop had said they were very rare, and that he had not seen any for a long time, and Mother, of course, wondered then where the fish had come from because this would mean little Hillary's parents had driven over 60 miles to the city for the fish, and she said they would have to phone up the Nashes and thank them especially for such a nice, thoughtful present—and that was all about the fish on the second day.

On the third day, Gramps sat in his favorite chair, and he had put the fish bowl lower down on the record player near the window because he was going to be in the room and wanted to watch the fish at eye level, and Mother came in and warned him about putting newspaper under the bowl so as not to stain the dark walnut record player in case there was "any splashing" and Gramps was going to say that goldfish don't splash very much but he thought better of it for Mother was in one of her grumpy moods, and then Tomasina came in and reminded, "Watch out for Timmy, the cat."

"I'll bust him one with my cane if he comes near," Gramps said, and he then sat in the chair watching To and Fro, and the sunlight streamed through the bowl which acted as a prism and the light caught, too, on the shiny pearl and pinkish-colored pebbles on the bottom, and filtered through the rich, green, snake-like fern, and the two fish swimming—one gold as the summer sun, the other as a black shadow, seemingly not a fish at all, made a beautiful picture and Gramps was very content sitting in his chair just watching.

But after awhile, Gramps said to Aunt Tomasina, who had come back into the room, that To and Fro were not suitable names. "The gold one is *Fro* all right, but that black one—he sulks at the bottom and doesn't move much, except for some quick darts now and then, like an arrow. No, we'll have to call *him* something else." And Aunt Tomasina bent over the bowl and the black fish edged towards the surface and she could see his tiny eyes which were smoke-colored and like smoke seemed to move or float as stirred by a wind, and Tomasina suddenly straightened up and quickly went from the room and Gramps took his nap, then, sitting in the sunlight in his favorite chair, and lucky Timmy, the cat, was outside and couldn't get in for Gramps fell fast asleep.

But after awhile Gramps felt strange; it was like a shadow he said, later, that had come into the room, and he awoke from his nap with a start and he said he felt something was wrong and

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didn't know what it was. He was wide awake then and he saw the sun had fled the room, to be sure, and it looked like rain outside. But that wasn't it; Gramps felt uneasy in his bones.

And then his eyes fell on the fish bowl and the black one was no longer on the bottom next to the gaily-colored pearl pebbles, and in fact, Gramps couldn't see it at all at first, and then he saw a dark, slim shadow hiding in the long, snake-like fern, and then he saw the gold fish up above, highly agitated, swimming back and forth, and all of a sudden the dark fish darted up from the depths and took a nip at the gold one, and the gold one, swimming frantically, dodged around and around, and the dark one would glide like some tiny shark to the bottom, or like a submarine, Gramps said, and wait. And then when the gold one was still, it would come again.

Gramps watched this for quite awhile, and he thought the gold one would die of excitement and he called Tomasina and told her: "These here two fish are fighting and the black one's gonna kill the gold one, mark my word," and Tomasina, an old spinster and inclined to think about sex, said, "Bosh! It's some indecent mating dance or sex play which we know nothing about."

But Tomasina watched for awhile and the dark one attacked again and again, not with haste but with great slowness and deliberation, but persistent always, sliding up through the fern and coming in on the flank for a nip, and the gold one would be in a panic and whirl and twist and dodge at incredible speed, and Tomasina said again that it was some strange form of love play, and that was all for that day on the fish.

It was Marcy who saw them on the third day and she cried out in alarm at the sight of her beautiful gold one who seemed tattered and torn with bits of the fragile, delicate fins gone, and Gramps said that the black fish was always hungry and that he should be fed more and then he wouldn't be so snappish. And Marcy quickly tore off a big chunk of fish flake food and crumbled it into the bowl and then she went off to school and Gramps shrugged his shoulders and went out for his morning constitutional, not that he needed the walk, but morning time was when Mother was most grumpy and it was best not to be around until after she'd had her breakfast and had tongue-lashed poor Tomasina a bit.

In the afternoon Gramps again took the gleaming bowl with the sunlight playing on the multi-colored pebbles on the bottom and the black, black fish dormant next the fern, and the restless gold one weaving to and fro, and put it on the record player with newspaper to guard the "splashing" where he could see the fish and the colors more easily, and held his cane at ready to ward off Timmy, the cat, lest he get any ideas, and he sat down in his favorite chair to watch, for somehow the colors glinting in the bowl were soothing to an old man, and he remembered the days when his own life had more color to it, and the days when Mother didn't nag so and his son-in-law was around and things had more order and shape.

And once again Gramps fell asleep and once again he woke up with a sudden start and he saw the black one's savage attack and he called aloud for Tomasina and even she was impressed this time. Tomasina said: "The black devil means to rape her, and I'll fix that!" And sure enough that very afternoon Tomasina marched herself to the pet shop and bought another bowl, for as she said the gold one looked "plumb peaked" dodging around, protecting her virtue, and she brought home a smallish bowl and a little cloth fish scoop and she and Gramps put the black one in the smaller bowl all by himself.

And Gramps moved the small bowl with the black fish in the kitchen, and when Marcy came home from school, Tomasina quickly said that the two fish had a lover's spat and they had taken up separate homes which was all right with Marcy for it was just like her mother and dad she said. "They're divorced! And my daddy's the black one!" And that was that for the day.

The next morning at breakfast, Gramps came down early for he always ate alone before the rest of the family was up for he thought we made too much noise, and he took the black fish and bowl down from a high window ledge, safe from Timmy, the cat, and put it down on the table while he ate his eggs and mush, and he said, "Now me black-hearted monster. Now, how do you

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like this?" And then as he watched, Gramps thought for a moment the black fish was dead for it had sunk to the bottom and lay motionless and nothing seemed to rouse it but Gramp's finger which he put in the water to see if he could stir it up some, and the fish came up then, a bit too quickly Gramps thought, its black snout pointing like an arrow, and Gramps pulled his finger out and said, "You're alive, you little black bastard! How do you like it alone, eh!"

And after breakfast Gramps went into the living room to see the gold one high on the mantle, and it seemed unholy restless, seeking in the green fern for its tormentor.

THAT AFTERNOON at nap time, Gramps brought the black one in from the kitchen and placed the two bowls side by side, but Tomasina said, "Oh, bosh! Fish can't see through those funny bowls at each other." But nevertheless Gramps said, "Oh, let them try peeking at each other." And so Gramps watched the sun pour into the bowls like liquid gold, and it made dazzling colors as it broke on the prism of the glass and sparkled on the colored pebbles and Gramps thought the colors soothing and after awhile Tomasina left the room to run errands for Mother and Gramps dozed off only to wake with a chill and his eyes searched quickly for the black fish for the sun had gone from the room, and the black one was highly agitated, whirling around and around in his small bowl as a dervish, turning end over end, and making other, strange, unfish-like movements. And Gramps thought he detected a small whirlpool made from the black one's quick movements and he was about to get more newspaper to protect the record player from splashing, but his eyes sought the other bowl and the gold one, too, seemed distressed and its movements were wild and nervous, just like the times when it had been quartered with her tormentor.

And Gramps thought well, maybe we were wrong—this was all mating play and they should be back together, and Gramps was about to change them and then he looked closely at the gold one with its naive, staring eyes, its saccharine, blank, insipid expression, and he said, "Well, now! I don't know about this!" And then he left the room and the two fish in their separate bowls were left on the record player for the night.

It was Tomasina who found the dead body of Timmy, the cat, on the living room floor the next morning and she emitted a high-pitched scream and everybody came running, and last came Gramps, but he didn't look at the cat on the floor but went straight to the fish bowls, and sure enough the gold one was gone, and Gramps couldn't see the black one anywhere—at least at first. But when Marcy said she saw the black one down at the bottom of the bowl, and she went to put her finger in to touch him to see if he was dead, and Gramps made a quick swat at Marcy's hand with his cane. "Gawd amight! Don't put your finger in there!" And sure enough, as Marcy withdrew her finger the black one moved swift as an arrow, but it was too late for him to nip Marcy's finger thanks to Gramps and his cane.

And Marcy began to cry then and Gramps said something about her being "a first born child," and Tomasina spoke up and said, "That ain't no way for an honest goldfish to act," and that's when Mother began to check on the present in earnest and she called up the Nashes right away although it was only seven-thirty in the morning and they liked to sleep fairly late, and they acted surprised and said, no, they hadn't been to the city to get any presents, not since Christmas time, and they'd ask little Hillary about the present and call us back.

And it turned out that "some man" had given little Hillary the goldfish; a short man, little Hillary said, "something like Marcy's daddy," but that was all anyone could get out of her. Mother then asked to speak to little Hillary personally and she asked her a few more questions over the phone, her voice getting loud and scratchy, but then Hillary began to cry and Mother hung up sharply, saying, "That damn little brat, she knows something!" But we didn't dare ask Mother to explain and we all gave up on it seeing as how Marcy knew that little Hillary was an "awful liar sometimes," and I spoke up and said that Hillary could have swiped the fish from the lake over at City Park and maybe spent the money for Marcy's birthday present on candy, but then

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we couldn't guess how she would get a fish bowl, and that anyhow she didn't seem quite smart enough for all that trouble.

So, in the afternoon Gramps put some sort of lid over the small bowl and we all went down to the pet shop and a short little man there said he didn't quite know what kind of a fish the black one was. "Some kind of tropic, perhaps," he said, and he seemed a little embarrassed and the veins stood out in his neck and he wiped his face with a handkerchief. And we all thought then the pet shop man did look something like Marcy's dad, gone these many years.

Gramps stood around for awhile in the store and Marcy ran up and down looking at the turtles and the birds and all. But Gramps kept coming back to the big fish tank, looking closely at the goldfish, and as I was standing near him he said to me, "Funny, they all remind me of someone I know very well. They have a pop-eyed, self-aggrieved, long-suffering, prissy look in their eyes I don't like . . ." And then he broke off, for Mother had come up to him.

PRETTY SOON, Gramps, still standing by the fish tank, asked the pet shop man would he take the black one to keep and the little man said he would be glad to, and we all watched him as he took a scoop and put the black one in the large tank with all the gold ones, and as soon as the black one hit the water the others—maybe thirty or forty of them—skittered away in endless golden ripples, wave upon golden wave, looking as they moved in flight like golden straw. And the black one sunk to the bottom of the tank glowering, and smoke seemed to curl up out of his tiny, tiny eye slits, and Gramps said, "A good nip now and then to let them know they're alive," to no one in particular. And that was all about the fish. Except on the way home Gramps leaned over to Tomasina and said, "You were right about the name."

"What do you mean?" answered Tomasina.

"Wanna make a bet Timmy died of eating spoiled . . . well, spoiled fish?" asked Gramps. But nobody answered him, and after awhile in the almost dead stillness of the car Gramps said, "Rumple, no Grumblestiltskin, and it serves him right!"

But finally, Aunt Tomasina said, "It's all about sex troubles of which we know nothing about," and Mother then spoke up in sort of a scratchy voice, "Hush! Tomasina, not in front of the children!" And we all rode back to the house in silence although Mother did begin to cry softly, staring blankly out the glass windows of the car.

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B O O K

A Burnt-Out Case, by Graham Greene; New York; The Viking Press; 248 pp.; $3.95

In Search of A Character: Two African *Journals*, by Graham Greene; New York; The Viking Press; 93 pp.; $3.50

A critical method which limits itself to examination of style, psychology, character, naturalism and the like will overlook the most central aspect of Greene's work: man as a metaphysical being. When V. S. Pritchett complains, "Somewhere it has gone wrong, . . . Querry does not exist at all," he makes just this error. For it is precisely this fact—that Querry does not *ek-sist* at all, that he has become an anonymous "X" (as he is called in the Congo Journal)—this fact is the central structural element of *A Burnt-Out Case*.

Querry is a burnt-out architect who has travelled to a remote African leproserie, not in search of new interest or diversion (though both the doctor and the priests of the colony try to interpret his visit in this way), but simply in flight from his own boredom. It is, moreover, a metaphysically founded boredom, such as Kierkegaard describes in *Either/Or*, and its fundamental manifestation is a lack of desire to create. Querry does not lack technique or craftsmanship, but he can no longer find any reason to bring his powers into play.

His profession and success as a world-famous architect have failed him, and so has his success with women. He can no longer love, even tentatively, and he cannot accept a false love, either of man or God, in other people. He says to his acquaintance, Rycker, who has idolized him as a saint on the basis of a series of misunderstandings:

> "I begin to think we are not so different, you and I. We don't know what love is. You pretend to love a god because you love no one else. But I won't pretend. All I have left me is a certain regard for the truth. It was the best side of the small talent I had. You are inventing all the time, Rycker, aren't you? There are men who talk about love to prostitutes—they daren't even sleep with a woman without inventing some sentiment to excuse them. You've even invented this idea of me to justify yourself. But I won't play your game, Rycker."

Even the atheistic humanist, Dr. Colin, is not in such desperate straits. When Querry asks, "But if we are incapable of love?" the doctor answers:

> "I'm not sure such a man exists. Love is planted in man now, even uselessly in some cases, like an appendix. Sometimes of course people call it hate."

Behind the ironies of plot—the mistaken insistence of both Rycker and Father Thomas that the desert of Querry's heart is aflame with divine love—lies the more complex irony that each character's view of his own capacity for love is a more shallow judgment than the evident 'misunderstanding' of the other characters. And behind this irony lies the author's stubborn refusal to make a final judgment in God's behalf. At the center of Greene's personality lies that same "certain regard for truth" which prevented Father Rank, at the end of *The Heart of the Matter*, from making a judgment on God's mercy. Greene had achieved this suspension of human judgment on behalf of the divine once and for all in his earlier novel, and he has maintained it throughout *A Burnt-Out Case*. In the same passage in which Querry is ironically compared to Schweitzer, there is an elliptical reference to the former work.

Querry's loss of love, for both man and God, is closely related to his loss of a sense of play and laughter, and this interrelationship is part of the general psychological scenery of the novel. Throughout *A Burnt-Out Case*, Querry has tried unsuccessfully to smile. But finally he learns to laugh at himself, and Rycker, erroneously supposing that Querry has seduced his wife, and, again erroneously, that Querry is now laughing at him, shoots him in a fit of passion. Querry has paid with his life for his liberation from boredom, and the topic of this scene is a triangular relationship (albeit imaginary) of love. But Rycker, in a conversation with Father Thomas, has previously exposed the theological aspect of play and love. Father Thomas says:

> "Sometimes I think God was not entirely serious when he gave man the sexual instinct."
>
> "If that is one of the doctrines you teach in moral theology . . ."
>
> "Nor when he invented moral theology. After all, it was Saint Thomas Aquinas who said that he made the world in play."

Greene has not only tied sex and play together with this remark; he has linked them both to the creation of the world. Here we recognize a view of life and art which was embodied in the medieval doctrine of analogy as the *analogia attributionis*, the attributive analogy through which God gives the breath of life to the world, just as the artist gives the breath of life to the work of art. With one stroke Greene has united the fundamental medieval understanding of art as analogy with the equally fundamental modern understanding of art as play, and has crossed tracks with some of the greatest contemporary European philosophers.

If the loss of human love is a loss of interest in sex, the loss of love of God is a loss of interest in prayer. This loss, this decadence into empty

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formula, is the inability to participate in the creative analogy of attribution. In this decadent frame of mind, Querry can create neither as an architect nor as a lover, and he is insensitive to the creative power of God within himself:

> "Perhaps [he says] it's true that you can't believe in a god without loving a human being or love a human being without believing in a god. They use the phrase 'make love,' don't they? But which of us are creative enough to 'make' love? We can only be loved—if we are lucky."

Greene had already strongly attacked the 'domesticated' love of religious ceremony divorced from transcendental meaning in *The Power and the Glory*. In *A Burnt-Out Case*, Querry renews the attack.

> "Men have prayed in prison, men have prayed in slums and concentration camps. It's only the middle classes who demand to pray in suitable surroundings. Sometimes I feel sickened by the word prayer."

He realizes that his boredom, his inability to work or love or pray, are all related to the "suitable surroundings" of the "middle classes," and it is this stifling comfort from which he is in flight, even to the extent of seeking pain and suffering.

The search for suffering is in fact the central theme of this novel. The analogy between the bodily decay of the insensate leper and the spiritual decay of the insensate architect is too obvious to require elaboration. It need only be remarked that the physical disease takes two forms: one in which the extremities decay and painlessly fall off, and the other in which the nervous system is attacked, in which case there is intense pain and palsy, but no rotting away. Querry's slow progress in learning to suffer is mentioned periodically throughout the novel. At the beginning he writes in his diary: "I feel discomfort, therefore I am." Later on Dr. Colin asks him: "Wouldn't you rather suffer than feel discomfort?" And at the end of the novel, Querry says to the doctor:

> "You said once that when one suffers, one begins to feel part of the human condition, on the side of the Christian myth, do you remember? 'I suffer, therefore I am.' I wrote something like that once in my diary, but I can't remember what or when, and the word wasn't 'suffer.' "

Greene has had this idea strongly in mind for quite some time. On the title-page of *The End of the Affair*, he quoted from Leon Bloy's *The Woman Who Was Poor:*

> "Man has places in his heart which do not yet exist, and into them enters suffering, in order that they may have existence."

To the list of the constituent acts of existence—love, play, and prayer—we must now add suffering. But these are not independent acts; we are not free to choose some and omit others. They are bound together, and either totally present in existence (in the strongest sense of the word) or totally absent in non-existence, boredom, the leprosy of the soul:

> "I suffer from nothing. I no longer know what suffering is. I have come to the end of all that too."
>
> "Too?"
>
> "Like all the rest. To the end of everything."

To anyone unable to understand and experience these interrelationships, Querry's final salvation through laughter, his absurd laughter at himself as he dies, must seem a bizarre miscarriage of divine justice.

As a balance to the suffering portrayed in *A Burnt-Out Case*, Greene offers his own compassion—a personal quality which he shares with Léon Bloy and Georges Bernanos, and which shines through the whole work. He has no patience with anyone, layman or priest, who lacks the quality of compassion for either man or beast. And he refuses to believe in any god who does not likewise have this capacity. The dialectic between the priests and the atheist doctor, one of the most fundamental characteristics of the first part of the book (and another interest which Greene shares with Bernanos) is carried on throughout the novel and is restated on the last page:

> "Your god must feel a bit disappointed," Doctor Colin said, "when he looks at this world of his."
>
> "When you were a boy they can't have taught you theology very well. God cannot feel disappointment or pain."
>
> "Perhaps that's why I don't care to believe in him."

If forced to choose between the "God of the philosophers" and the compassion of atheistic humanism (a fundamentally unreal choice, albeit one often presented in Christendom) Greene makes it quite clear that his sentiments lie on the side of compassion. The end of *A Burnt-Out Case* is the most extreme statement of Greene's on this subject to date. Though both *The Power and the Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter* end with the same juxtaposition of doctrine and existence, the conflict lies totally within the Christian context in both earlier novels, where it is a priest who disclaims the "God of the philosophers" in the face of a situation not quite tailored to the body of doctrine. In *A Burnt-Out Case*, we are left with the suspicion that it is perhaps after all Doctor Colin and Querry who are the unconscious agents of the Living God, while the priests are only functionaries in the empirical world. But the complex structure of irony in this work is mysterious enough,

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even in Greene's mind, to prohibit us from making any judgment on God's behalf.

> "The priests are more concerned with engineering, electricity, navigation and the like, than with the life of man or God—but that is X's wrong impression. He has come seeking another form of love and is faced with electric turbines and problems of building, and he fails to understand the priests as much as they fail to understand him." (Congo Journal.)

We are faced here with two aspects of compassion difficult to see from one point of view: the compassion of the healer, directly involved with the sick, and the compassion of the sustainers of the institution, without whose efforts the work of the healer would be greatly retarded. The latter form of compassion is of course involved with technology, but Querry takes it for technocracy—nothing but technology—and technocracy is precisely what he has come to the Congo to avoid. His boredom is the fate of the man whose technique has no goal beyond itself.

Boredom is not mere privation of activity; it is the cessation of human time, that time in which and into which a human being exists. It is the psychological aspect of the metaphysical disease of despair, called by Kierkegaard the "sickness unto death." And it is clear that Greene is not simply describing the fate of an unfortunate displaced person: he is criticising the structure of this society itself—a society in which commercial, scientific, and religious interests alike have failed to direct sufficient attention to the human goals beyond their respective methodologies.

Greene moreover draws a parallel between the technique of the architect with relation to his purpose and the technique of a novelist with relation to his goals. He writes in the novel:

> "A writer doesn't write for his readers, does he? . . . My interest was in space, light, proportion. New materials interested me only in the effect they might have on those three. . . . Materials are the architect's plot. They are not his motive for work. Only the space and the light and the proportion. The subject of a novel is not the plot. Who remembers what happened to Lucien de Rubempré in the end?"

This statement should make us think twice before trying to trace the genesis of either *A Burnt-Out Case* or *The Heart of the Matter* in the pages of the slim and overpriced *In Search of A Character*. What place, then, does the fact of character have in his work? Certainly insofar as a character is an element of the plot, it is a material for the novel, and not the subject. But what about the character as a person? Clearly he does not wish Querry, formerly "X," to have any special attributes of social reality. Nowhere in the novel do we get much of an idea of what Querry looks like. In fact, through all the description of the tropical jungle, and through all the detailed portrayal of the deformities of the lepers, Querry maintains perfect generality on the physical level. So does he on the personal level, and if there is anything to be learned from the journals (which give us no real insight not obtainable from the novels themselves) it is that Querry and Doctor Colin have been whittled out of the "raw material": the artistic process has not been for Greene one of assembling data out of which to construct a character, but of hewing down his real experience in order to arrive at the artistic kernel which is already present, or at least being born, there.

The circumstances of the two journals—the first and more recent relating to *A Burnt-Out Case*, and the second to *The Heart of the Matter*—are somewhat different. The more recent journal is no mere travelogue, but as much a record of Greene's thoughts about the novel as about what he 'actually' experienced (whatever that may mean!). The older journal, on the other hand, is hardly recognizable as the source material out of which *The Heart of* more recent journal, unlike the older one, is no mere travelogue, but as much a record of Greene's thoughts about the novel as about what he 'actually' experienced (whatever that may mean!). A comparison of the two shows that the more recent one, far from being raw source material for his latest novel, is well on the way towards disclosing themes and forms as well.

The themes we have so far noted —boredom, love, play, prayer, suffering, compassion, technique—indicate the metaphysical character of *A Burnt-Out Case*. Addition of faith and hope to this list gives the novel its properly theological character. The difference between these two aspects is worked out by Greene as the difference between the doctor's and Querry's view of hope and faith on the one hand, and the priests' view on the other.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that Greene, in drawing Dr. Colin as an atheistic humanist, does not by any means portray him as an irreligious person. Colin is atheistic in the strict sense, but he is paradoxically open to metaphysical experience. Yet he denies the idea of God he has come to understand, and he describes the virtues of faith and hope as diseases. (In this connection see pages 68 and 240 of the novel.) There is indeed an element of absurdity in Greene's own understanding of the nature of faith, which he voices in the Congo journal:

> "How often people speak of the absurdity of believing that life should exist by God's will on one minute part of the immense universe. There is a parallel absurdity which we are asked to believe, that God chose a tiny colony of a Roman empire in which to be born. Strangely enough these two absurdities seem easier to believe than one."

Consequently we may not pass over Querry's dying words in the novel without some reflection as to the meaning of his utterance:

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"Absurd," Querry said, "this is absurd or else . . ." but what alternative, philosophical or psychological, he had in mind they never knew.

The themes we have noted so far are all clearly identifiable in the novel, and the journal, while it adds nothing to the novel, lends credence to the belief that the author's simple and fluent style is supported by a depth of speculative thought. There are, on the other hand, certain major structural elements to the metaphysical novel which appear here only by implication. One of them is the spiritual journey. In *A Burnt-Out Case* there appears that part of it which St. John of the Cross called "the dark night of the soul." Father Thomas (in the novel) is inclined, like the pseudo-religious Rycker, to see Querry as a saint, and the journalist Parkinson, having stumbled in upon this situation, is all prepared to capitalize on it. Querry, however, sees himself as a hopeless case, and Dr. Colin sees him as a person whose disease must run its course, burn itself out. Whose view is the right one? Characteristically, Greene suspends judgment on this question, but there is at least a hint that even Dr. Colin somehow catches a glimmer of the possibility that Querry is, unbeknownst to himself, journeying through that desert described by St. John. And in a conversation with Father Thomas, the doctor says:

> "It's much more difficult to cure the mind than the body, and yet I think the cure is nearly complete."
>
> "The better the man, the worse the aridity, Father Thomas said."
>
> "In our treatment we get burnt-out cases, too. But we don't say they are suffering from aridity. We only say the disease has run its course."

Is Querry's difficulty then mental disease or spiritual aridity? Are these two separable? Or is mental illness founded in spiritual aridity?

> "Leprosy cases whose disease has been arrested and cured only after the loss of fingers and toes are known as burnt-out cases. This is the parallel I have been seeking between my character X and the lepers. Psychologically and morally he has been burnt-out. Is it at this point that the cure is effected?" (Congo Journal, p. 26.)

Greene's final answer seems to relate to that same passage from venial to and through mortal sin which characterises *The Power and the Glory*.

> "(The priest) had always been worried by the fate of pious women: . . . It was one's duty, if one could, to rob them of their sentimental notions of what was good. . . . He said in hard accents: "I have a child."

But *A Burnt-Out Case* begins where *The Power and the Glory* left off, as we have already noted. Querry is as 'lost' at the beginning of the novel as the priest is at the end of the earlier one. If, therefore, Evelyn Waugh was scandalized by Greene's attitude towards the priesthood and the Mass in Greene's earlier works, he now has twice as much reason to charge blasphemy. For not even the pretension to faith remains here; the Church is, for both Querry and the doctor, passé.

What then can we make of Greene's present attitude towards the Church? In the light of a series of false rumors about Querry, one of them involving his servant, Deo Gratias, Father Thomas asks:

> "Is the story of Deo Gratias a lie? Is the new hospital a lie? I hope I have been able to put the story in the right context, that's all."
>
> "What is the right context?"
>
> "The Catholic context."

And, intertwined in the fabric of ironies out of which the plot is woven, we find the character Parkinson, the journalist, also interested in putting the story in the same context—because a new saint will increase circulation. Greene comments in the journal:

> "I would claim not to be a writer of Catholic novels, but a writer who in four or five books took characters with Catholic ideas for his material."

In view of the remarks we have already made on the relation of material to proper subject, it seems that Greene is much more interested in exploring the extremities of the Catholic situation than in justifying the faith. He writes further:

> "Reading the last volume of Julian Greene's journal—*Le Bel Aujourd'hui*—with growing irritation. . . . He talks too much of God and the saints. In one passage he talks of a need to eliminate everything which is not pleasing to God. But is God pleased with a succession of pious platitudes on his nature? Wouldn't he give them all for one blasphemous line of Villon? I cannot help picturing the good God glancing at this book and throwing it aside as an author throws aside one more worthy and boring thesis on his work by a student for a baccalaureate. (Congo Journal, p. 18-19.)

Unlike others of a more delicate constitution, Greene has always been able to say, with the psalmist, "If I descend into Hell, Thou art with me also."

There remains, finally, the question, how good a technical job has Greene done with his material. *A Burnt-Out Case* is certainly his best work to date, both in fluency of style and in cogency of structure. It contains almost none of the flashy sentences and trite figures of speech which abound in his earlier works; he has abandoned (though not quite entirely) the cinematic devices on which he has leaned rather too heavily in the past. He has taken plot structures from the earlier works and refashioned them with far greater finesse. For example, the rather mundane husband-wife-lover triangle of *The End of the Affair* reappears here with an added element of irony (testifying also, by the way, to Greene's perdurable interest in sex as a fundamental element in plot structure); whereas the 'deus ex machina' miracles with which the former work ended are now no longer required as proof of

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the hero's salvation. There is nothing so artificial in the unification of this work as the rococo framing around the beginning and the end of *The Power and the Glory*; nor is it burdened with the cumbersome intrusion of the diary into *The End of the Affair*. Nor are the forces of good and evil neatly parceled out amongst the different characters. Greene has often succeeded in suspending judgment in his plots, but this is the first work in which he has carried this sensitivity into the hearts of his characters. Father Rank, in *The Heart of the Matter*, changes rather abruptly from his usual fatuous outlook in order to disclaim any final knowledge of God's mercy. His parallel in *A Burnt-Out Case* is Father Thomas, who is criticized by the Father Superior for taking too analytical a view of problems about which he can know nothing; but even the Father Superior still stands to learn from the atheist doctor's humanism at the end of the book, while the doctor for his part has something to learn about love and hate.

Is Greene too melodramatic, too horrible, or too depressing in this novel of sickness and deformity? Has he exaggerated his image by setting it in a leper colony? Only those critics who never get closer to human nature than a publisher's meeting or a suburban parish could fail to recognize that every major city of the world can and does match and surpass these horrors, and only such a critic could be shallow and complacent enough to leave all these themes undetected in his own life.

—Jonathan Ketchum

Each In His Darkness. By Julian Green. New York: Pantheon Books. 347 pp. $4.50.

Each In His Darkness, the eleventh of Julian Green's excellent novels and his best since the 1920's, is a strange and brilliant melodrama of religious anguish in the "psychological" tradition of French and American fiction. As Hawthorne's principal Twentieth Century disciple, Julian Green has worked in the richest tradition of the American novel—"the psychological, symbolic, gothic tradition," as Leslie Fiedler has named it—while bringing to it certain flourishes of "realism" which remind us that Green was schooled in France as well as at the University of Virginia. Julian Green's odd dual status as the Paris-born son of parents from the American South who has written most of his books in French, has prevented an adequate assessment of the "American" quality of his fiction. We find him "French"; the French find him "Anglo-Saxon"; all agree that he is exceptionally "distinguished." Perfectly bilingual, Green has told us in his memoirs and journals how, when he came to write, he felt more at ease in French than in the English that he heard in his parents' Parisian apartment; that it was English which seemed a borrowed coat, a little stiff, a little bulky. His own art has been a kind of hybrid, with its turbulent Romantic matter recounted in sentences of a somber and classical restraint. Some of the earlier Julian Green novels read a little like *Wuthering Heights* as it might have been rewritten by a Jansenist Flaubert.

He was born Julian Hartridge Green in 1900 in Paris where his father worked as a representative of an American cottonseed oil company. Both parents were from the American South (Virginia and Georgia) and both were Protestants, but the father was converted to Roman Catholicism in 1915 and the fifteen-year-old Julian accompanied him into the Church. During the First World War, Julian Green served in the ambulance corps with Dos Passos and Hemingway; during the Second World War, he served in the American Army in this country, and was stationed in Orlando, Florida. After the 1918 armistice, he attended the University of Virginia where he occupied rooms once lived in by Poe; memories of that residence are reflected in *Avarice House* (1926), in the early short stories, in *Moira* (1950), and in the novel under review. Returning to France, Green studied painting for two years, but, discouraged with his failure to progress, he turned to writing and, during a school vacation, completed a novel, *Mont-Cinère*, which was published first in France (in 1926) and then in an American translation as *Avarice House*. This first novel is a powerfully written, but monotonous study of several miserly women in post-Appomattox Virginia; and Julian Green's family was outraged to see that he had put avaricious and unpleasant harridans into his uncle's Virginia house, which he had, in the closing pages of the novel, incinerated. *Avarice House* made the French critics say that Green was too "Anglo-Saxon" to treat "love" passionately—a remark which infuriated him into writing his second novel, *Adrienne Mesurat* (1927), published in an American translation as *The Closed Garden*. Beginning with the reviews of this novel, the term "genius" recurs in most discussions of Green; the enraptured Gide announced that he waited breathlessly for each new Julian Green novel.

The Closed Garden is perhaps Green's masterpiece. It is a perfectly written, beautifully structured novel of moral isolation in a young girl, Adrienne Mesurat, living in a provincial French town, where even the most trivial events are so regulated by custom that it is a matter for astonishment in the town if one desires to clip the geraniums on some day other than the day designated for it. The melodrama—Adrienne "accidentally" kills her father; her hopeless infatuation for the doctor who lives next door eventually drives her into madness—of this novel is convincing because it is accompanied by careful realistic touches which French critics find "Balzacian." (This novel, along with its "sequel," *The Dark Journey*, and *Madame Bovary*, were given out in "Government Issue" to American troops during the Second World

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War as "guides to life in the French provinces.") *The Dark Journey*, which followed in 1928, was even more powerful, if less finished as a work of art. On *The Closed Garden* and *The Dark Journey* and on a group of novellas of this same period, *Christine and Other Stories*, Julian Green's reputation as a great fictionist rests.

In the 1930's and early 40's, Green turned out novels regularly every other year or so. Their turbulent mysticism intrigued the German critics; Ernst Robert Curtius lectured on them; and Mann, after reading Green's *Midnight* (1936), placed "the Franco-American genius" at the head of the novelists of his generation. The novels of this period—*The Strange River*, *The Dreamer*, *Midnight*, *Then Shall The Dust Return*, *If I Were You*—were increasingly fantastic and mystical; and, although all of them have scenes which bear the impress of his powerful genius, I find them less satisfactory than the novels of the 1920's. The milieux depicted, though purportedly French, seem less vivid than the Virginia of *Avarice House* and the early novellas, or the "realistically" delineated French provinces of *The Closed Garden* and *The Dark Journey*. And the characters so lack volition that they appear as *somnambules* moving about the prison of their daily round, while the puppet-master's personal themes of frustration, melancholia, madness, and isolation are sounded over and over with increasingly hysterical emphasis. One becomes aware that Julian Green, for all the chaste sobriety of his prose, the disciplined severity of his novels trivided into almost mathematically equal sections of a hundred pages each, is a wholly deliberate spellbinder. His world is a waking nightmare where the agonists move in a lurid, El Grecoesque light.

In *Moira* (1950), Green returned to the American South of his young manhood and recaptured his early power. This novel is a masterly and brilliant study of a religiously-obsessed Puritan, of a type that Flannery O'Connor was to do less well later, and it seems to have initiated a new concern with the South of his family origins and with Roman Catholicism (after his baptism in 1915, he underwent a "second conversion" in 1939). He switched suddenly to writing plays—*L'Ombre*, *L'Ennemi*, *Sud*—and then returned to the novel with *The Transgressor* (1958), a melodramatic exploration of homosexuality, which he treated, characteristically, as a dark and destructive passion like the hopeless love of Adrienne for the doctor in *The Closed Garden*. Julian Green as a novelist has benefitted by this earlier investigation of inversion, for the homosexual Angus Howard of *Each In His Darkness* is as well-done as any similar character in Gide or Isherwood.

This new novel is set in the American South, in and around an unnamed city which is apparently Savannah. Converging upon Wormsloe, the country estate of the dying Horace Ingram, a Catholic "reprobate," come Horace's various relatives: his impoverished nephew, the only other Catholic in the family, Wilfred Ingram; Wilfred's cousin, Angus Howard, rich, "agnostic" ("Angus took a cigarette from his pocket. 'It's much more subtle,' he said, snapping his silver lighter. 'I deny nothing. On the other hand, I assert nothing positively. Do you get the idea?'"), and a committed homosexual; Angus' indulgent mother, who has abjured the Catholic faith to marry a wealthy Tidewater Episcopalian; James Knight, a sulphur-tongued Presbyterian fanatic, with his charming young wife, Phoebe. Uncle Horace asks Wilfred to pray for him, and this simple act forces Wilfred to examine his own nature: outwardly pious, inwardly torn by constant desire for women. Horace gives his nephew a packet containing securities and some quasi-pornographic mementoes of past affairs with very young girls (the apostate-Catholic Mrs. Howard says to Wilfred of the dying Horace's predilections, "Thirteen . . . just thirteen. He had to have them in their first bloom, you see, in their first bloom and pure—no mistake about that man being fond of purity. Not the way you care for it, not in the same manner. . . . And of course religion changed nothing in his life. He was seen at Mass. I'm not saying this to hurt your feelings, but we see religion in a different light. We want something clean, unspotted.")

After Horace's death, Wilfred sells the securities and can leave the shirt-shop where he has been employed as a salesman. He wallows luxuriously in sexual pleasures, alternating with almost equally luxurious tantrums of remorse. He discovers that he "fatally" attracts almost everyone he meets. On one hand, he desires above all the wanly pious Phoebe, the wife of James Knight; on the other, he is dismayed to discover that his homosexual cousin Angus is infatuated with him. Angus bombards Wilfred with anguished and indiscreet letters ("As he folded the letter to place it in his wallet, the idea came to him that this was the first love letter he had ever received and for a whole hour he could think of nothing else.") Wilfred's attempt to offer religious counsel elicits this response: "Pleasure apart (writes Angus), my life is strangely like some descriptions of hell, for love has no place in it. At certain times, at certain most precise moments, those that come *afterwards*, do you understand, I hate my chosen companion who holds me down as never a planter held down his slaves before the Civil War. The hardened sinner you think me can't hope to be understood by a man of your kind. You believe from top to bottom of your soul, and the sins you may commit are washed away as soon as you confess them. . . . When I was a child and read the Gospel, I wanted to be like the One whose name I have not the courage to write here. In a certain fashion I think He is still with us on earth, although I can't

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believe in God. If the door of the room where I am writing opened and He came in and sat down, I could speak to Him. This dream has never left me, even in the darkest hours. I could have told Him what I can't tell anyone, because He would not have judged me and it's because He is not here that I am alone."

The novel closes in an imbroglio of melodramatics which may offend readers new to Julian Green. I remember seeing, in a public library copy of *The Transgressor*, the judgment pencilled composedly in a sloping schoolgirl hand, "This is an utterly silly book." Hobbledehoy yo-yo enthusiasts, the Hayseed Hodcarriers of the Marxist critical camp, mannequins stepping like Borgian *camerlinghi*, all lacquer and purring *scélératesse*, from the pages of *Vogue*—these creatures, alas, will never be numbered among the devotees of Julian Green. Yet, it seems to me that Julian Green is one of the few American fictionists of permanent interest. Some of our brilliant fictionists have been, like Julian Green, dazzling successes in their twenties: Poe, Melville, Stephen Crane, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Wilder, Faulkner, Wolfe, Glenway Wescott, Nathanael West, McCullers, Capote, Styron. But a very few of the finest of our fictionists have been, like Julian Green also, still great masters of "the art of fiction" after passing their fiftieth year: Hawthorne, Melville, James, Katherine Anne Porter, Faulkner, Hemingway, Warren. I have emphasized in my account the "American" quality of Julian Green, but it is only fair to notice his "French" side: much of this latest novel recalls Bernanos, and it is as good as the best Bernanos. This would be remarkable enough even in France; in the decidedly diminished context of "American Catholic fiction," *Each In His Darkness* has no serious rival for distinction of writing, depth of perception, and general mastery of execution.

—Hieronymo Kreuz

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, by Muriel Spark; Philadelphia; J. B. Lippincott Company; 187 pp. $3.95.

One of the most uniquely gifted writers to have appeared on either side of the Atlantic since the end of the Second World War is a young Scotswoman named Muriel Spark. It is only six years since the publication of her first novel, but in that brief time she has firmly established herself as a highly accomplished and extremely versatile artist.

Muriel Spark was born and raised in Edinburgh, the daughter of a Protestant mother and a Jewish father. She had been married and divorced by the time she was twenty years old. She then moved to Central Africa, where she lived for several years. She returned to England early in 1944, and took a job in the political intelligence department of the British Foreign Office. After the war she began to write. She won a contest with one of her early stories, edited two poetry magazines, and tried her hand at a number of literary forms: short stories, poetry, biography, criticism. Her stories appeared in several English and a few American magazines. Her biographies of Mary Shelley, John Masefield and Emily Brontë were published; so was a book of her poems. She was received into the Catholic Church in 1954.

Mrs. Spark's first novel, *The Comforters*, appeared in 1956. Graham Greene was moved to say that it was "one of the few really original first novels I have read for many years." The *New York Times* tabbed the author as someone to keep an eye on: "Trend-watchers are advised to note the name of Muriel Spark. Before very long they may be able to boast that they read her when."

Books have since issued forth from the talented Spark pen at the approximate rate of one per year: *Robinson* was published in 1958, *Memento Mori*, in 1959, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* and *The Go-Away Bird* in 1960, and *The Bachelors* in 1961. Her American publisher was named the winner of the seventh annual Thomas More Association Medal because of her work; this is an award given for "the most distinguished contribution made to Catholic publishing during the past year." The citation which accompanied the medal described Mrs. Spark as "not only a skillful writer, but a satirist of unique and brilliant talent and perception. Her remarkably fresh and entertaining work is clearly a therapeutic attack on superficiality and effectively reconstitutes the case for basic Christian values. Yet hers is an authentic fiction in the highest tradition of English literature, a pure satire, free of apologetics and polemics."

One is inevitably impressed by the amazing variety of plots and characters which Mrs. Spark has invented. The reservoir into which she dips for strange and wonderful types with which to people her stories seems inexhaustible. One of her novels is concerned with diamond smugglers; another treats of life on a desert island; spiritualism plays a large part in yet another; in one of her books all of the characters are over seventy, while in another they are mostly unmarried men in their thirties. Mediums, angels, poltergeists, even the devil, work themselves into one or more of the Spark stories. And the reader never quite knows just what kind of a tale Mrs. Spark will come up with, nor how it will all work out. She is full of delightful, and sometimes rather amazing, surprises.

In an issue last fall, *The New Yorker* magazine devoted some one hundred of its pages to a long preview of Mrs. Spark's latest work, a short novel entitled *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. The story has now been published in book form, including some added material which was not in *The New Yorker*. It demonstrates once again the depth and the range of this remarkable writer.

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie is the story of a spinster school

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teacher and of six of her favorite pupils. The story takes place in Edinburgh during the nineteen-thirties, at the Marcia Blaine School for Girls. Miss Brodie is a teacher there in the lower department. She is in her forties, a woman of strong mind and pronounced tastes. Her teaching is not confined to the classroom. She takes her girls to the theatre, to concerts, to art galleries and museums, for walks through the streets of Edinburgh, to her flat for tea. They read poetry together; they learn about Mussolini's marching Blackshirts; they discuss the love lives of Charlotte Brontë and of Miss Brodie herself (she lost the one great love of her life in World War I); they are introduced to the rudiments of astrology and the work of Einstein and the glories of the Italian Renaissance painters. Miss Brodie's great passion is art, and here her tastes are strong and sure.

> " '. . . and I must tell you about the Italian paintings I saw. Who is the greatest Italian painter?'
> " 'Leonardo da Vinci, Miss Brodie.'
> " 'That is incorrect. The answer is Giotto, he is my favourite.' "

Miss Brodie is convinced that she is now in the prime of her life and at the height of her powers. She never tires of telling her pupils how fortunate it is for them that she has reached that stage: "One's prime is the moment one was born for." Because she is now in her prime, Miss Brodie carefully selects a small group of girls whom she can influence, can mold, into something of an image of herself. "Give me a girl at an impressionable age," she says, "and she is mine for life." She is utterly confident of her ability to turn out the very best: "all my pupils are the *crème de la crème*."

The girls she selects for her special clique are something of an odd lot, and the author describes each of them with an unerring knack for concise characterization. There is Monica Douglas, "famous mostly for mathematics . . . and for her anger," and there is Rose Stanley who is "famous for sex." There is Eunice Gardiner, "small, neat and famous for her spritely gymnastics and glamorous swimming," and Sandy Stranger, who is "merely notorious for her small, almost non-existent, eyes, but she was famous for her vowel sounds." Jenny Gray "was the prettiest and most graceful girl of the set." And there is Mary Macgregor, "whose fame rested on her being a silent lump, a nobody whom everybody could blame." There are the chosen ones, the Brodie set.

The story unfolds at a leisurely pace, winding back and forth over a period of several years. We come to know Jean Brodie both through her own eyes, seeing her as she sees herself, and also through the eyes of her six pupils and her associates on the faculty. The organization of the story seems a bit loose, but when the book is finished the reader realizes that the author has in fact put together a very tight and effective use of time sequences.

The heart of the story lies in the eventual "betrayal" of Miss Brodie, which results in her premature retirement from the school staff. The irony resides in the fact that it is one of her own set who gets her dismissed. The how, and more importantly the why, of this act of apparent treachery make up the essence of the book.

In the person of Jean Brodie, the author has given us a very complex and a very believable personality. One can easily imagine that such types lived and breathed and wove their webs in the England and Scotland between the great wars. Mrs. Spark describes them for us: "There were legions of her kind during the nineteen-thirties, women from the age of thirty and upward, who crowded their war-bereaved spinsterhood with voyages of discovery into new ideas and energetic practices in art or social welfare, education or religion. The progressive spinsters of Edinburgh [were] the vigorous daughters of dead or enfeebled merchants, of minsters of religion, University professors, doctors, big warehouse owners of the past, or the owners of fisheries who had endowed these daughters with shrewd wits, high-coloured cheeks, constitutions like horses, logical educations, hearty spirits and private means." At first acquaintance, Miss Brodie seems the very model of a modern schoolmarm.

But there is another side to the Brodie character, and it is a less appealing one. We come to see that Miss Brodie has a fatal flaw in her make-up: she has no doubt whatever that God is always on her side, no matter what her course of action may be. Even more alarming, she tries to play God, to shape and manipulate the girls under her charge and thus mold them to her own peculiar design. "She thinks she is Providence, thought Sandy, she thinks she is the God of Calvin, she sees the beginning and the end." It is this election of herself to grace, this almost total insensibility to the possibility of her own guilt, which leads in the end to the undoing of Miss Brodie. One thus concludes that her final betrayal is perhaps less an act of treachery and more an act of justification.

One of the six girls finally becomes a Catholic and then a nun. It turns out that it was she who triggered Miss Brodie's dismissal from the faculty, not on the grounds of her affair with the music instructor, as everyone had suspected, but on the grounds of politics. Another one of the old set is visiting with the nun at her convent, and they fall to discussing their erstwhile mentor. The visitor speaks to the sister:

> " 'Before she died, Miss Brodie thought it was you who betrayed her.'
> " 'It's only possible to betray where loyalty is due,' said Sandy.
> " 'Well, wasn't it due to Miss Brodie?'
> " 'Only up to a point.' "

It is clear that Sandy believes she had served a higher good by causing her old teacher's forced retirement. But

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it is also clear that Sandy recognizes who was the principal influence during her school years. Another visitor asks her: was it literature? was it politics? was it Calvinism? And Sandy answers simply: "There was a Miss Jean Brodie in her prime."

Muriel Spark has been quoted as saying that thus far all of her novels have been minor ones. This is probably as fair an assessment of her work as could be made. It must be added, however, that with the great gifts which she has amply and repeatedly unveiled, with her sure talent for plot and characterization, and in view of the control and economy of her writing style, it is surely not too much to hope that we may someday have a really major work of fiction from the hand of this ingenious lady.

—Earl Douglass

The End of the Battle. By Evelyn Waugh. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 319 pp. $4.50.

As a young man in the 1920's and 30's Evelyn Waugh wrote a group of novels that belong among the minor satiric classics of the language. Chrome-hard, linear, assured, they brought into modern writing a brilliance of surface it has not often had. Mr. Waugh's art in those days was an exceedingly detached and spare one. Most of the usual connectives were left out, and the narrative was managed in a series of brilliantly juxtaposed scenes. The dialogue had about it a terse authenticity that was almost eerie. Peopling the pages was a set of wryly observed types: Bright Young People, politicians, Press Lords, African potentates, evangelical religionists. In the world thus observed, things were often desperate, but they were never serious. At his work, the youthful Mr. Waugh looked out and found that "lo, it was very good."

Beginning about 1945, however, a change began to take place in his writing. *Brideshead Revisited* was the first of the novels in which it appeared. Though there have been waverings, the general direction of this change at least is clear: there is a new access of the lyric in Mr. Waugh's writing, and a movement toward more ambitious subjects. Instead of detached and relentless satire, we find low-key lyric statements of a Catholic position. Instead of heroes who are themselves objects of Mr. Waugh's satire, we get heroes who, under the most transparent disguises, represent Mr. Waugh and his views. Instead of straight satire, we get the serious novel, one that affirms human and religious values while making comic capital of malice and stupidity. Mr. Waugh's critics have not been kind to him as a serious novelist, which is, of course, their privilege. But often they have mistakenly assumed that he was still writing straight satire. His now-completed trilogy of novels on the war is an instructive example of middle-Waugh. It is only a mixed success.

In *Men at Arms* (1952) we met Guy Crouchback, the spiritually dry thirty-five year old son of an ancient recusant family who chooses to see in the war a crusade. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Treaty, he believes, has brought England's and humanity's enemies unmistakably out in the open. Against these enemies, Crouchback, whose war experiences are a good deal like Mr. Waugh's, takes a knightly vow and becomes an officer in an unfashionable regiment, the Halberdiers. We follow him through his training and his first brief experience of action in Africa.

Officers and Gentlemen (1955) recounts the process of Crouchback's disillusionment. He is transferred to a Commando group for retraining and sent out to the Middle East for service. After months of frustrating inactivity, his group is sent into Crete just at the moment of the British collapse there. In the evacuation, he makes his escape in an open boat. But in the nightmare of Crete and escape, he is disabused of any romantic notion of the war as a crusade, and this disillusionment is completed when England enters into an alliance with Russia, thus forfeiting the justness of her cause.

In *The End of the Battle*, Mr. Waugh thoughtfully provides a synopsis of the earlier volumes and then proceeds to destroy Crouchback's last illusion, that of personal honor retained in a war only doubtfully just. Crouchback is sent to Yugoslavia to do liaison work with the Partisans. There he finds the Communists in control, with the sufferance of high British and American authorities. His assignment puts him in the ironic position of purveyor of armaments to the hated Communists, and his efforts to circumvent them are invariably frustrated. The chivalric scales finally fall from Crouchback's eyes in a discussion of the war with one of a band of Jewish refugees he is trying to aid. The refugee says:

> "It seems to me there was a will to war, a death wish, everywhere. Even good men thought their private honour would be satisfied by war. They could assert their manhood by killing and being killed."
> . . .
> "God forgive me," said Guy. "I was one of them."

Crouchback has found that private honor is an illusion in an enterprise so mixed as modern warfare.

A trilogy of a round thousand pages seems the long way of demonstrating that World War II was not a crusade and that the chivalric ethos was irrelevant to it. The lyric schoolboy heroics of Crouchback's knightly vow do not sit lightly on the shoulders of a character who, we are asked to imagine, has reached thirty-five. This fault embarrasses the whole military-political part of the trilogy despite the able treatment of many individual episodes such as the Battle of Crete or of political ironies in Yugoslavia. Particularly, this embarrasses *The End of the Battle* where the reader is likely to feel that Crouchback has held onto his illusion wilfully long.

The religious dimension of the trilogy is somewhat better managed.

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As an ancient recusant family, the Crouchbacks represent the Old Faith, a view of life and an ethic that does not admit quantitative judgments. Guy's father is the main exemplar. His idea of human unity, the Mystical Body, is contrasted with the cynical dismemberment of the world that the Teheran Conference represents; his gentleness and charities with the grasping vulgarity of his world. The low-keyed lyricism in which he is presented makes him a convincingly fine human being, perhaps even the saint that the author intends. Old Crouchback's insistence that "quantitative judgments don't apply" is given a finely rendered application in Guy's relationship with his former wife, Virginia. She, after divorcing Guy, has gone through a series of marriages and affairs, the last of the affairs with Trimmer, a hairdresser in peacetime, but now as the result of a phony propaganda campaign, a hero in the Commandos. When Trimmer gets her with child and leaves her, Virginia asks Guy to remarry her. Aware that she is carrying Trimmer's child, Guy ignores the reigning worldly ethic and marries her. Mr. Waugh manages this episode very well, and the effect is a fine human vindication of Guy's action against the grasping code of the Kilbannocks, who have managed to make even the war pay off for them. In its religious dimension, Mr. Waugh's trilogy is a good deal like Ford Madox Ford's great *Parade's End*. Unhappily, when it is put over against Ford's work, it does not stand up very well, for Ford was a novelist of much greater power than Mr. Waugh.

Mr. Waugh's prose remains an admirably lucid and economical thing, a thoroughly civilized product. It is a more flexible and, I should say, a more human product in these volumes than was the chromium in which the early satires sometimes seemed to be written. There are occasional falterings into the trite and, once, into the fake-portentous ("And the sanctuary lamp was burning at Broome"). These would probably not have got into the early books. But it is equally true that these books could not have been got into the early prose.

Mr. Waugh has written a frequently delightful comedy and a social history, possibly definitive, of England in the war years. If the trilogy lacks the tight perfection of the youthful satires, it has greater range and greater humanity. The characters are drawn more nearly "round," and they are drawn in a comic profusion almost Dickensian: Apthorpe, Jumbo Trotter, Peregrine Crouchback, the Laird of Mugg, and the daft fascist Miss Carmichael. Nobody else writing today could have managed them. As evidence that age has not withered Mr. Waugh's formidable satiric powers, there are, "pinned and wriggling on the wall" Ian Kilbannock, Arthur Box-Bender, Trimmer, Ludovic, Penfield, and Brompton. In addition to the wide range in type and station of the characters, there is a witty survey of social institutions; notable among them are a London club, the wartime literary Establishment, the Air Force. Critics will probably continue to prefer the early satires and to wish the author had remained perpetually a brilliant young man or a perennially bright undergraduate like Mr. Aldous Huxley. The common reader will plump, I think, for the more human, if clearly less perfect, comedy of middle-Waugh.

—Warren Coffey

The Marquise of O and Other Stories. By Heinrich von Kleist. New York: Criterion Books. 318 pp. $5.00.

An enterprising publisher, Criterion Books, has gathered together, for the first time in English, the whole of Kleist's fiction, and has issued it as a sturdy omnibus volume prefaced by one of Thomas Mann's more charming essays. Kleist, as this collection clearly demonstrates, is one of the most significant fictionists in German; a maker of *novelle* unexampled for morbid power; a forerunner of Isak Dinesen, of Mann himself, and of the once-fashionable Kafka. Several of Kleist's eight stories—*The Marquise of O*, *Michael Kohlhaas*, *The Foundling*, *The Earthquake in Chile*—are among the masterpieces of fiction in any language; and the others, even something so brief as *The Beggarwoman of Locarno*, have such touches of pathos, power, or eerie penetration, that almost any real writer would have been delighted to have created them. Kleist's principal fame, of course, is as a dramatist, the greatest in German; and Mann, evaluating Kleist's plays against those of Goethe and Schiller, states categorically that "Kleist's plays alone . . . give us the archaic shudder of myth the way Sophocles and Aeschylus do." An "archaic shudder" runs through the great dramas—*Penthesilea*, *The Prince of Homburg*, the extant fragment of *Robert Guiskard*—but through them, also, and even more manifestly through the tales, runs a *nouveau frisson* of phosphorescent Romanticism.

Bernd Heinrich Wilhelm von Kleist was born in Brandenburg on 18 October 1777 into a Prussian noble family long distinguished for its professional military service to the Kingdom of Brandenburg; one ancestor, the popular soldier-poet Ewald von Kleist (a kind of 18th Century Prussian Rupert Brooke), had died gloriously on the battlefield, and various majors and generals von Kleist had devoted themselves with stiff-necked fanaticism to the greater glory of War. Major von Kleist, Heinrich's father, died when Heinrich was eleven; he was governed thereafter by women, by his mother (only sixteen years older than Heinrich), and by his half-sister, Ulrike, until, at the age of fifteen, he was forced to enter a fashionable Prussian regiment as an ensign. Seven harrowing, hallucinated years followed – years of *angst*, *noia*, *ennui* in the campaigns against Napoleon, and the worse

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years of languishment at Potsdam in the barracks where all the worst qualities of Prussianism proliferated —until the sensitive poet, a dreamer steeped in the intoxicating ambiance of Rousseau, requested of Frederick William III, King of Prussia, his release from military service that he might devote himself to philosophical and scholarly pursuits. The release was granted. But the appalled Kleist family thereafter regarded Heinrich as a "failure" who had "disgraced" the family tradition; after Heinrich's suicide, the family destroyed all "compromising" papers and manuscripts, including, so Kleistian scholars conjecture, the draft of a full-length novel. The tales, and most of the dramas, had already been published, and thereby escaped destruction.

The period after 1799 was, even for Kleist, excessively *mouvementé*. He entered the University at Frankfurt, became engaged to Wilhelmine von Zenge, the daughter of the Town Commandant, but abandoned his studies shortly thereafter to travel to Berlin, to Switzerland, to Paris, accompanied by friends or by his devoted Ulrike, who gave him of her inheritance as well as of her sisterly devotion. He wrote in these years *Die Familie Schroffenstein*, an absurdly melodramatic vendetta-play redeemed by an astonishing conclusion of commingled sensuality and *tendresse*, and the powerful historical tragedy, *Robert Guiskard*, in which he placed that chevalier among his plague-decimated army at the Gates of Constantinople. All who heard *Robert Guiskard* were overwhelmed by it; the poet Wieland wrote to a friend that "if the shades of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Shakespeare were to combine to write a tragedy, the result would not surpass Kleist's play"; but Kleist himself, in a fit of neurotic revulsion, burned most of the manuscript, saving only a portion from which he was later able to recast the magnificent opening tableau of 525 lines which we know today as *Robert Guiskard*. Moody, feverish, unstable, ambitious one moment to "wrest the laurel" from the great Goethe and the next desiring only annihilation, Kleist, after lecturing his fiancée with drill-master pedanticism in a series of letters on the "holiness" of "Motherhood," abruptly broke off his engagement to the baffled Wilhelmine. Aside from his beloved Ulrike, the only other passionate attachment in his life was to the actress Henriette Vogel, with whom he entered into a suicide pact on 21 November 1811 on the shores of the Wannsee.

In the intervening years, in the great creative period from 1805 to 1810, Kleist was somehow able to get down, in the comparatively tranquil purlieus of Königsberg and Berlin, virtually the whole of that great work on which his reputation rests: the tales; the tragedies *Penthesilea* and *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, the former the most "sensational" of his dramas and the latter the most "assured"; and the four lesser plays, the deliciously sophisticated *Amphitryon*, the farcically popular *Der zerbrochene Krug*, the sentimentally mystical *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*, and that most arid of Kleist's productions, *Die Hermannschlacht*, with its savage and interminable tirades. Ludwig Tieck brought out a collected Kleist in 1821, ten years after the poet's suicide, when his memory was still beclouded with scandal; but the definitive critical edition of the *Werke*, from which Kleist's real glory dates, did not appear until 1905.

Kleist's fiction, his *Erzählungen*, had appeared in two volumes in 1810 and 1811. The eight tales (or *nòvelle*, to be precise, for they resemble the Italian model) which Criterion Books has collected are: *The Marquise of O*, a delightful and romantic account of a woman, who, impregnated by an unknown man, advertises in the newspapers, asking him to appear that she might marry him; *Michael Kohlhaas*, which Mann calls "perhaps the strongest of all German stories," a masterly short novel of a 16th Century horse dealer who, seeking justice against the entrenched aristocrats who have defrauded him, eventually becomes an outlaw and incendiary transfigured to heroic proportions by the popular imagination; *The Beggarwoman of Locarno*, a terse account of spectral revenge; *The Engagement in Santo Domingo*, a lurid Haitian romance of miscegenation in the time of the Negro uprisings of 1803; *The Foundling*, an audacious tale of a foundling who impersonates the long-dead lover of his foster mother, and is killed by his foster father, who, condemned to hang, refuses absolution that he might "go down to the lowest pit of hell" to wreak his vengeance once more upon that accursed foundling; *The Earthquake in Chile*, with its celebrated opening sentence, "In Santiago, the capital of the kingdom of Chile, at the very moment of the great earthquake of 1647 in which many thousands of lives were lost, a young Spaniard by the name of Jeronimo Rugera, who had been locked up on a criminal charge, was standing against a prison pillar, about to hang himself"; *Saint Cecilia, or The Power of Music*, a miraculous "legend" imbued with Kleist's extraordinary and unexpected adoration of Catholicism; and *The Duel*, which investigates "the ways of God" and "the ways of men" under the aspect of a medieval trial by combat.

I have always felt that the best of Thomas Mann's stories—*Death in Venice*, *Tonio Kröger*, *The Blood of the Walsungs*, *Felix Krull*, *Disorder and Early Sorrow*, *Mario and the Magician*—are the finest stories in German; they are so marvelous that I cannot imagine their equals. But, just below them must be set these stories of Heinrich von Kleist —after a hundred and fifty years finally made available in English in this convenient omnibus which should be in every library, public or private, which pretends to distinction.

—Kuno von Pregnitz

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